international, film review

INTERNATIONAL FILM REVIEW

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

of the International Catholic Cinema Office (O. C. I. C.)

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INTERNATIONAL FILM REVIEW

NUMBER 2

1949

YEAR I



A means of expression and an audience . . .

We are particutarly delighted to be able to publish this statement which His Eminence Cardinal Suhard, Archbishop of Paris, has graciously deigned to send us. It constitutes a most precious encouragement, not only to our Review but also to all those who share our confidence in the future of the Cinema.

> Paris. February 13th, 1949 32 rue Barbet de Jouy

When people talk of the position of the Church with regard to the cinema, many of them automatically take up an attitude of distrust and hesitancy with regard to this new art. It is true that during the past 30 years the suation has sometimes called for preventative measures against the degrading effect on man of a certain type of production. But it would be entirely false to suppose that these measures constituted in the eyes of Catholics a completely satisfactory solution of the problem presented to the Christian conscience by the cinema.

Following the Encyclical «Vigilanti Cura» we refuse to consider the film as evil in itself and we regard with constantly growing interest the work of those specialists working to establish the proper place of this new means of expression which God has placed at the disposition of humanity and for which we are responsible before Him.

If any proof were needed it is furnished by the fact that O.C.I.C. has published (the first of the great organisation interested in the film to do so) a splendid review, circulating by means of its several language editions throughout the entire world. This example alone will open the eyes of those who, by design or ignorance, think of the attitude of the Church only under its negative aspect.

To fulfil its Apostolic task Christianity needs both a mode of expression and an audience. Mode of expression: the cinema as a consequence of its manifold visual and aural possibilities, holds the chief artistic and technical place. It brings into play the whole range of emotional and intellectual activities and finds a choice field in the realms of science and pedagogy. Its constant evolution permits it to penetrate more and more intimately the secrets of the human soul — even to abstract reasoning. When one thinks of the road travelled since the beginning and the possibilities which are open to it, particularly in the use of symbolisation one understands the prodigious future that is before the cinema.

The cinema also offers the Apostolate the —est vast — audiences in the world. More and more uncommon — especially in the towns — are those people who are accustomed to the cinema for their diversion.

Everyone looks to the cinema for a release after their labours — often very trying — many seek there an escape from their unhappy lot — a large part seek a widening of their knowledge of the world.

So, far from spending our efforts in trying to keep people away from the cinema let us provide them with a spectacle worthy of their dignity as man. Let us show them, by means of the images on the screen, what might be their life as children of God, inevitably marked with sufferings — but also joyous and strengthened because based on Him who never deceives. It is necessary that Christians should more and more accustom themselves to judge films at their true value, and that they should use their enormous influence to give the moral and economic support necessary for films of quality. They should not hesitate to call upon the highest artistic and technical ability available whenever they wish to see presented on the screen subjects inspired by religion. They should realise above all that the most authentic religious film is that which evokes the testimony of a simple life — honest — deeply human — in which every movement is seen to be impregnated with Divine Love.

In this effort the INTERNATIONAL FILM REVIEW — a project so dear to the late lamented founder of O.C.I.C. — Canon Brohée — will certainly play a most important part. I must say here how great importance I attach to it and to its task of elaborating Christian doctrine of the Cinema. It will be for the I.F.R. in very large measure, to spread abroad and particularly throughout professional milieux the doctrines of which it will represent the spiritual guarantee.

Emmanuel cord Tuhard arche de lary

Paul VAN ZEELAND

Minister of State,
The eminent Belgian politician
gives us some important statements on:

OF WESTERN CIVILISATION

For many years and thanks to the friendship which bound him to Canon Brohée, Mr. Paul Van Zeeland has been interested in Catholic Film Action. We recall the interesting address given by him at the International Catholic Film Congress at Brussels in 1947 on «The Cinema in the World». Once again he has kindly shown his interest by granting us an interview on this subject and has authorised its publication in our Review.

— «Do you consider, M. le Ministre, that contemporary politicians fully recognise the importance of the Cinema?»

«It is not as a politician that I propose to reply to your questions but rather as a layman knowing little about the cinema as such, but one who tries humbly and with sincerity to understand the current trends of human thought.

You are primarily interested in the place of the cinema in Western civilisation; now, are we to regard it as a power which contests the Christian origins of civilisation? Not if we study the means by which the leaders of Christian civilisation have usually tried to spread its influence. We find that their constant endeavour has been to employ those means which assured them of the greatest success. The teaching of Christianity was effected in the first place by means of the spoken word: it reached crowds of increasing importance who were drawn by the ability of the preachers.

This stage was followed by the progress made by the written word and its multiplication across the various countries of the world. There were the abbeys and their libraries. Nor was art neglected. One recalls the place occupied by music in the life of the Church. One too often forgets that it was in the Cathedrals that the mystery plays which gave birth to modern dramatic art, were performed.

Whenever a new means of expression has been offered to mankind the leaders of Christian civilisation have made use of it to intensify their effort in reaching the masses. Now the cinema constitutes the latest of these means and the most powerful one, — indeed we have hardly as yet begun to understand it, — one which is destined to play a prodigious part in shaping civilisation.

In view of the limitless possibilities it offers it would be contrary to the logic of history that this medium should be neglected or ignored.»

- «Do you consider that politicians have failed to interest themselves in the cinema from the point of view of its possibilities for propaganda offered, for example, by the news reels?»
- «No, I sincerely believe that people are beginning to take count of the importance of the problem taken as a whole. But there are still very few who fully recognise the proper place of the cinema as a new and original medium of expression.

This recognition extends the domain of the cinema beyond the limits of a work of art. It seems to me necessary that the Catholic world needs to understand that every tendency of our civilisation could be expressed by means of the cinema, both artistically and technically; science, information, education etc.»

— «Do you think that this way of looking at things has very much support in non-Christian circles?»

«With the exception of several attempts to use the cinema as a propaganda instrument no one has yet seriously studied this problem. Christian thought could, therefore, be in the van on this subject. It could make a very important contribution to the pioneer work on «Filmology».»

— «Do you think that the economic influence among Catholics is sufficient to allow them to make an effective intervention into the industrial organisation of the cinema?»

«I cannot answer this question not having sufficient knowledge of the particular problems governing the participation of Catholics in the affairs of the cinema. In general I think it best that a strict interpretation of industrial and commercial rules be observed. It is never a good thing to invite capitalists, whoever they may be, to take part in enterprises which are questionable from an economic point of view however elevated their object may be.

There is a great difference between the film industry and all other industries, for the product of the Cinema industry exercises an influence on the spiritual and moral life of the people — a fact which creates a very definite responsibility for those who direct the industry. Arising from this consideration there are two opposing theories:

There are those who wish to create a «Catholic Cinema» that is to say societies having an altogether «confessional» and moralist character and altogether distinct from normal cinema enterprise.

Others think it better that Catholics occupy themselves professionally in the life of the cinema, bringing into these purely commercial and industrial organisms the influence of their way of life.

In spite of a certain preference for the second of these two solutions, I would not presume to utter a definitive opinion for it demands, in order to do so, a much greater knowledge of the problems involved than I possess.»

— «We know, Monsieur le Ministre, the eminent place you occupy in the United Europe Movement. Are you able to say whether among the different means envisaged to help to bring about unity among the European peoples, you and your colleagues have thought of using the cinema?»

«The cinema is admirably devised to serve as an instrument for the mutual knowledge of the peoples of Europe and for the creation of a community spirit among them. We have not, however, as yet outlined any precise action to this effect. It would be a useful thing if competent groups in the cinema were to study the question and to make some propositions to us in this connection. I should be particularly happy if this initiative were to come from those Catholic organisations which, in the various countries, are working to raise the spiritual and cultural standards of the cinema.»

We left our eminent interlocutor sincerely convinced that his words will find a favourable echo among all those who see in the cinema one of the most efficacious means for bringing about international understanding.

THE UNESCO FILM PROGRAM

FOR 1949

by Ernest BORNEMAN

Head of Film Unit, Projects Division, Department of Mass Communications, UNESCO

In its first issue, the INTERNATIONAL FILM REVIEW published an article by Ernest Borneman, head of the Unesco Film Unit, on Unesco's film activities during the year 1948. Since then, the Third Session of Unesco's General Conference, which took place at Beirut, has laid down a number of new directives which have considerably changed the pattern of Unesco's film operations for the year 1949. We have asked Mr. Borneman to explain these changes and their implication in a brief article exclusive to INTERNATIONAL FILM REVIEW.

The division of Unesco's film activities into three units will continue in 1949. The Free Flow Division will continue to devote its work to the removal of national, financial and legal obstacles to the free circulation of films. The Technical Needs Division will continue to investigate the world's shortages in film equipment, training methods and laboratory facilities. The Projects Division will continue to serve as an agency to stimulate the production, distribution and utilization of educational, scientific and cultural films.

TECHNICAL NEEDS DIVISION

From February to June 1949, Unesco's third team of field surveyors investigated the technical needs of seven countries in the Arab world - Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey; five Latin American nations - Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile and Paraguay; and two of the Scandinavian countries - Finland and Sweden. On July 25, when the findings of the surveyors have been analysed and indexed, an International Commission of Film Experts will meet at Unesco House in Paris to consider the findings and, with the help of representatives from the countries under survey, to make recommendations for the alleviation of the needs that have been discovered. As in the previous years, 1947 and 1948, a printed report on the findings and recommendations of the Commission will be published within five weeks after the end of the expert meeting. Together with the two preceding reports it will serve as material towards a world encyclopedia of film equipment, film training methods and film laboratory

To implement the resolutions of the 1948 Commission on Technical Needs, Unesco has instituted in 1949 an international coupon system to permit the purchase of films and film equipment by soft currency countries from hard currency areas; has established a number of grants and scholarships in audio-visual education; has instituted research into the question of producing cheaper film projectors as well as projectors capable of operating without

mains electricity supply; commissioned an exhaustive study, for publication, of the use of mobile film units; and has compiled a registry of film training institutions, and of film technicians willing to aid other countries in training teachers and local technicians in educational cinema work.

Three new fellowships in the mass media were donated in 1949 to candidates from Ecuador, Mexico and Peru. In addition six reconstruction fellowships in cinema and radio education have been taken over from the year 1948 and have been made available to fellows from China, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Greece, Norway and the Philippines; three fellowships in the field of cinema education were granted to Unesco by the French Government to candidates from Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the Netherlands; twelve fellowships have been offered by various British authorities to candidates from Austria, Belgium, China, Denmark, France, Greece, Netherlands, Norway, Poland and Venezuela; and the Canadian Council for Reconstruction through Unesco has continued its offer of holding seventeen fellowships in cinema education open during the year 1949.

As for grants and donations of film equipment, Unesco has purchased and distributed 90 epidiascopes and 81 16 mm. film projectors to Austria, China, Czechoslovakia, France, Greece, Hungary, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Philippines and Poland. In addition, the Canadian Council for Reconstruction through Unesco has purchased ten 16 mm. projectors to be sent by Unesco to needy regions and Unesco itself has purchased, but not yet distributed, three additional epidiascopes and eight additional 16 mm. film projectors.

FREE FLOW DIVISION

The «Agreement to Facilitate the International Circulation of Visual and Auditory Materials of an Educational, Scientific and Cultural Character» was adopted at the Third Session of the Unesco General Conference at Beirut in November 1948. This Agreement, which is aimed at freeing these

materials from customs duties, quantitative restrictions and import licensing regulations, will come into operation as soon as ten Governments have individually ratified it.

Other Unesco activities aimed at facilitating the free international circulation of audio-visual materials included a compensation scheme based on special facilities for residence or cultural visits abroad by students, teachers and technicians concerned with audio-visual education, in return for which credits are to be opened for the acquisition of film equipment, and a series of requests to Member States that war-devastated countries, and other countries which lack sufficient hard currency, should take all possible steps to meet their needs for educational, scientific and cultural films and audio-visual material by the exchange of goods between themselves and other soft currency countries in the same region of the world; that they examine existing national regulations and practices governing the importation and purchase of audio-visual materials with a view to introducing or extending especially favourable treatment for the educational use of such materials; and that they allow accredited museums to import such materials required by them free of duty.

PROJECTS DIVISION

The most important new film project initiated in 1949 is a world catalogue of films on the world food crisis. To be published as part of a series of Unesco pamphlets under the general title «Food and People», the catalogue will be supplemented with a discussion guide to 25 selected films which will draw attention to the problems that have arisen from the clash between rising population figures and dwindling food resources.

Other projects include three discussion guides to films on education, science and international understanding; a special pamphlet in French and English on art films; and a world catalogue of films on the conservation of resources.

One of the continuing tasks of the Projects Division in 1949 will be the diffusion of news items about the production, distribution and use of educational, scientific and cultural films. No comprehensive international system of film cataloguing was etablished in 1948, and most of the national film catalogues issued during the year continued to be far from satisfactory.

A number of educational organisations in various countries have set up new services in 1948 to screen and analyse educational films and to make the results known in the form of catalogues, card indexes and discussion guides. Laudable as these services were, they proved to be generally limited to one country or to one language group. One of the main tasks of Unesco's Film Section in 1949 will therefore continue to be the diffusion of the series of international film lists which were prepared in 1948 with the object of making films produced in one country known to distributors and other film users in other countries.

Since it was obviously impossible to establish a comprehensive international catalogue of educational films, Unesco had to limit itself to four key subjects in its first international draft film lists:

Films on International Understanding Films on Fundamental Education Films on the Popularisation of Science Films on the Popularisation of the Arts.

However, in view of the large number of requests for information received by the Film Unit, an International Catalogue of Educational Film Catalogues was drafted in 1948 and will be sent out in 1949 to film users the world over who can carry out their own research by obtaining and consulting the catalogues themselves.

Meanwhile the system of indexing information contained in the world's film trade journals which was set up in 1947 to compile and spread information on new educational films, new methods of educational film distribution and utilisation, was carried over into 1949, and the information compiled in this manner was made available to other film trade journals as well as to all Unesco publications, especially the «Fundamental Education Bulletin», «Museum», and the «Unesco Radio News Bulletin».

In addition to the three films on Unesco's activities completed in 1948, Unesco is preparing four new films and a series of filmstrips dealing with Unesco's pilot projects in Fundamental Education in Haiti and China and those aspects of educational reconstruction which have not yet been covered by «CHILDREN OF THE RUINS», «HUNGRY MINDS» and «THIS IS THEIR STORY». This includes a film on children's villages, a film on international educational aid and the exchange of students and teachers, and a filmstrip on the re-education of children in wardevastated countries.

Jointly with the United Nations Scientific Conference on the Conservation and Utilisation of Resources, Unesco is also promoting a series of films dealing with such aspects of conservation as aerial resources surveying; the soil and water relationship in the Canadian plains; soil fertility in the Prairies; hydro-electric power development; avalanche control; conservation through oil chemistry, the Beyster Report on the physical resources of the Philippine Islands; new methods of irrigation, land acquisition and land use; the Tennessee Valley Administration; animal husbandry; conservation of fish resources; soil conservation in the Middle East; oil exploration; the co-ordination of the electric power grid of Europe; the relationship between health and resources development; underground gasification of coal; conservation of coal resources; town and country planning; management of bird resources; water supply pollution; the use of models in water control structure; and a cartoon film on the entire scope of the world's resource crisis.

To provide possibilities for evaluating new films and for their presentation at conferences and other Unesco functions, a film projection room is being installed at Unesco House in 1949, and an international film reference library is being compiled.

To provide a check on Unesco's entire scope of film activities, an international meeting of film experts will be held at Unesco House in November 1949. At this time the work of the last three years will be investigated, and a tentative new programme for the coming year will be formulated.

Ernest Borneman.

First Vice-President and Permanent General Secretary of C.I.D.A.L.C.

THE RESOLUTIONS OF C.I.D.A.L.C.

We asked our friend, N. Pillat, Vice-President and Founder and Secretary General of the Comité International de Diffusion des Arts, des Sciences et des Lettres par le Cinéma (C.I.D.A.L.C.) to comment for our readers the text of the resolutions passed by the International Congress of Educational Cinematographers held at Paris, October 1948.

Ever since its foundation, in 1930, C.I.D.A.L.C. has kept before its eyes the realisation of its motto, «Le rapprochement des peuples par l'image» (Understanding between peoples by

means of the visual image).

It is certainly by means of the teaching film that the cinema can and ought to bring peoples together in order that they may know and understand each other. There are educational films of every kind which the Cinema should distribute as widely as possible among young people and old in order to get at the masses, whoever they may be, so that they should be fully informed politically and otherwise. Such films should have but one object, namely, to instruct.

It was inevitable that after a war whose effects we are all still feeling cruelly, we should study on the international plane those problems connected with the Cinema which touch upon the educational

factor and have reference to the development of human understanding.

The last Congress at which these problems were studied was held in July, 1934, in Rome. C.I.D.A.L.C. felt that it was necessary to organize, at the same time that the Assembly of the United Nations was in Paris, an International Congress of Educational and Teaching Cinematographers with the object of considering again, after so many years, the problems of the Cinema as Teacher, and to

help, by means of its resolutions, to bring these problems to a practical solution.

The specialists on these questions included Professor Hubl (Austria), Father Lunders, O. P. (Belgium), Floyde Brooker (U.S.A.), M. Lebrun (France), Professor Branca (Italy), M. Franziskus (Luxembourg), M. Borel (Switzerland) and others who brought to this Congress the benefit of their knowledge and authority.

Later on the Complete Report of the International Congress will be sent to all persons and orga-

nizations who are interested in and concerned with these questions.

If this Congress has been of use to the Educational Cinema, we owe it not only to the competence of the delegates from the countries which took part in it, but also to the General Executive of the Department of the Foreign Office for Cultural Relations in France, the Executive of the French National Cinematographic Centre, and the encouragement given by U.N.O. and U.N.E.S.C.O.

The Congress of C.I.D.A.L.C in October, 1948, is but a stage on the long road we are taking in

the immense domain of the Cultural Cinema.

N. Pillat.

RESOLUTIONS REACHED BY C.I.D.A.L.C.

The Congress of the Educational Cinematographers organised by the International Committee for the Propagation of the Arts, Sciences and Literature by means of the Cinema (C. I. D. A. L. C.) was held in Paris from the 11th to the 16th October, 1948, under the Presidency of Monsieur Louis Marin and as a result of the initiative of Monsieur N. Pillat, Secretary General.

Although the resolutions of this important Congress accompanied by numerous teaching film projections were formulated a long time ago, it seems opportune to cite here long extracts in order to familiarise our readers

with this aspect of the problem and indicate the interest which the subject has for Catholics concerned with educational films and cultural formation so that they may, in their own countries, follow the progress accomplished in this domain of the cinema.

Official Establishment of an «Educative and Cultural Sector of the Cinema».

That in every country the existence and the necessity of an Educative and Cultural Sector of the cinema may be officially recognised.

That the most efficacious measures be adopted by the public authorities to ensure that an appropriate system be applied to enable it to function and develop both on the national and international scales.

This to be by means of:

a) the creation of a Statute permitting the total detaxation of educational cinema seances given under the control of the National Ministers of Education.

b) the subsidising of the production and distribution

of pedagogical and cultural films.

c) grants to schools and post-graduate associations and popular educational groups, to enable them to purchase the apparatus necessary for projection and specialist cinema libraries.

That each country form a Commission under the competent authority, charged with the task of selecting apparatus and films, both moving films and strips, intended for schools or cultural associations.

Formation of Cinematographic Teachers.

That in each country it be recognised that the members of the teaching faculties be provided with facilities for learning the practice and theory required in the use of the cinema as an instrument of instruction in school and a cultural method out of school.

That there be introduced into the curriculum of teachers' training colleges a course of study on the educational and

cultural use of film.

That a permanent confederation and standardisation of methods of cinematographical instruction be brought into being on the international plan.

That an important place be given to these questions in all educational and specialist publications as well as in public bulletins.

Cinematographical Culture.

That in the modern departments of human culture, the existence of a specifically cinematographical culture be recognised as well as the interest attached to its development and diffusion, particularly among those groups of people deprived of certain other means of access to the general culture.

That such cinematographic culture be subsidised by the government and the educational authorities (School courses, post-graduate course, Cine-Clubs, Amateur Cinema Groups,

Film Study Circles, etc.).

That the cinema, as a new art and language, be admitted to take its place on an equal footing among the subject matter of education.

Documentary and Cultural Films.

That the authorities in the different countries take efficacious and practical measures to assure that documentary and cultural films, the production of which is not commercially, feasible be produced and distributed on an equal footing with educational films.

That, especially among the programmes of general educational films, a place be reserved for films on Art (history of art, etc.) thus providing an introduction to art equivalent to those of science and literature.

Cinema and Children.

That the C. I. D. A. L. C. Bureau prepare a definitive constitution for an «International Commission for Children's Cinema».

That the problems attaching to the admission of children to cinemas be studied.

That there be established and multiplied special cinemas for children in which children under sixteen years of age may attend entertainment programmes.

That film production be induced to cater for films for

children.

That such films for children and adolescents be conceived and realised in accordance with the data provided by modern pedagogy and psychology.

That facilities for the exchange of such films on an international scale be encouraged, in order that the cinema may, as a result of the common ground thus created, between the young people of the world, contribute to a better understanding among nations.

Social Responsibility of the Cinema.

That the attention of the authorities in all the countries be drawn to the necessity for studying the social responsibility of the cinema, especially in rural and industrial areas as well as among other social classes deprived of adequate moral and cultural resistance.

Television: Educational and Cultural.

That the attention of the public authorities in each country be drawn to the national and international benefits to be derived from the adaptation of television and telecinema to teaching and culture.

That there be created an International Commission charged with the study of the problems of education and

Television.

That the formation of an international network be encouraged capable of dealing with actual technical possibilities for the spread of education and culture.

Practical Exchange of Educational Films.

That, with a view to preparing an international exchange of teaching films in the sense of a practical and concrete collaboration between educators in every country, production groups, or those possessing teaching films, hold themselves ready to send gratuitous copies of any teaching films they may possess in order that they may, with the shortest delay, be made known to teachers and educational authorities interested in the project.

International Exchange of Educational and Cultural Films.

That the project of International Convention prepared by UNESCO for the free circulation of films be adopted as soon as possible subject to the following emendations:

a) the limitation of the Convention to seances of a

non-commercial character.

b) the establishment of a catalogue of films possessing an internationally recognised educational or cultural value, conforming to the normally accepted system, previewed by the Convention and with a «Certificate» accorded by the producing country and accepted by the importing country.

c) the establishment of a system permitting the free entry, for a limited period of films having a particular interest and which do not justify the application of the ge-

neral prevailing system.

CIDALC Bureau.

That the Bureau of C. I. D. A. L. C. offer its services to UNESCO for the establishing of an «International Catalogue of Educational and Cultural Films», asked for by numerous countries.

That it undertake all liaisons likely to be useful for the realisation of these film projects.

Paris, October 16th 1948.

Léo LUNDERS, O. P.

General Secretary of the Centre Catholique d'Action Cinematographique, Belgium. Director of DOCIP. Brussels.

REALISM AND UN-REALISM IN THE CINEMA

One of the most outspoken books by Ilya Ehrenburg, written some years before the war was called «Usines de rêves» (Dream Factories»). These dream factories were the Hollywood studios. In effect, the cinema is, for the man without religion, before all else an escape from his customary world into a world of dreams represented for him, however, as an ideal reality.

If one were to ask the man in the street to define the cinema he would say, rightly enough, that a film is a succession of moving and sounding pictures telling a story or commentated by a speaker (documentary films) and representing reality. This definition is hardly scientific yet it seems to me sufficiently exact. In any case it has the advantage of placing us at once at the heart of the matter.

We are so accustomed to the cinema that we no longer take into account the monstrous illusion to which we are subjected; a black and white photograph which moves and speaks like a human being.

At the theatre we accept the conventions demanded by decor and costume: even the most exacting critic aquiesces when the actor opens a paste-board door or window, or when the backcloth reacts to the movement behind it. That is to say that at the theatre one is placed in a conventional reality of which one admits all the logical consequences, just as in literature one gives onself up to the author and accepts character and dialogue which may be in fact far from realistic.

At the cinema such conventions are unacceptable. There one demands an absolute and complete realism. And it is not that the cinema provides a convention far surpassing the best that the most daring of theatres could imagine; with the cinema, there is no question of decors and costume nor of persons attempting to create the illusion of reality. All that is simply replaced by a photograph projected upon a screen from which any kind of relief is absent.

If one were to speak thus to a cinema-goer he would doubtless reply, "but that is only a question of technique. Films have not yet reached their full development. The cinema has already conquered sound, colour films are improving, stereoscopic films are being tried out. When all that has been accomplished we shall have the perfect cinema". Perhaps. I think that when that moment arrives,

cinema as such will have ceased; we shall then have in spite of the relief, but a sculpted copy of reality.

Here we perceive one of the numerous contradictions peculiar to the cinema. From the point of view of technique (using that term rather than Cinema Industry, in order not to complicate matters), cinema technique is concerned, under the pressure of public opinion, to go to every length in its efforts to achieve reality, objectively speaking; on the other hand the true potentialities of the cinema are diametrically opposed to this for its true function is the interpretation of objective reality.

Let us examine the different elements of which the cinema is composed: photography, movement, sound, subject etc. and let us see how they react in view of reality.

THE ROLE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

First of all the primary element: photography. We do not intend to decide whether photography constitutes the essential part of cinema art or whether there is any other more essential element. For the moment let us assume that it is so. Photography occupies the primary place, it is almost the sine qua non of all film work*.

It sometimes happens, when climbing a mountain or when walking through a town, that one is struck by the grandeur or beauty of a particular point of view or landscape. But generally speaking one is likely to be disappointed by the flat, ordinary appearance of the developed snapshot. However, if one takes the trouble to use a filter or to use a tree or colonnade in the foreground or to look at the arch through an archway, one recovers something of the element of relief which captivated one in the first place.

This simple and well-known fact leads to some impor-

It can be seen that what may detract from the beauty and harmony of a landscape in reality may, on the contrary, play a creative part in the beauty of the photographic reproduction of the same scene. Actually, in order to

^{*)} I say almost.... there are certain films which do not depend on the creative assistance of photography, such, for example as animated cartoons, where photography is only the instrument of reproduction and plays an auxiliary technical role. From the point of view of the animated cartoon, photography has nothing to see.

enjoy to the full the beauty of a landscape it may be necessary to remove or conceal something that limits the best view.

Clearly, photography has its own manner of creating beauty. To the photographer, the subject is but a pretext for distributing elevations, shadows and lights to the best advantage. But this creative role is not essential and photography is above all a reproductive instrument. For, in this role, it evidently remains a function of the object that it be reproduced and if it is itself beautiful then it should be possible to express that beauty.

Let us use an example: a drop of water falling into a pool has no special beauty of itself. Nevertheless, it can form part of a beautiful photographic composition. In this case, the photo loses all relation with the object which was but the pretext and the photo has an independent value. On the other hand, in the case of an object beautiful in itself, it is possible to take a photographic image which lacks all significance.

It is equally possible to make beautiful pictures which are worthy of the beauty which the photographer wishes to capture, that is to say, pictures which faithfully transcribe for us the beauty existing around us.

Here we come up against a factor which every camera artist and every one with good taste (basically the same thing) knows instinctively: a factor which contains the germ of all the artistic possibilities of photography. A r n-h e i m («Film als Kunst») has analysed it with rare penetration.

Photography reduces a space to a surface. In other words, the perception of three dimensional reality is reduced in photography to a two dimensional surface. This proves at once that photography is functionally incapable of reproducing objective reality as it is in itself. The efforts of the photographer ought, therefore, to tend and do, in fact, tend, not to reproduce reality as it is but to recreate reality on another plane and from another angle, that of two dimensions.

It is for this reason that, in a panoramic view one introduces a foreground which gives a new effect of depth to the photo, an effect which is something different to the actual depth really existing: it is, in fact, a bimensional interpretation of reality.

It follows therefore that, without being paradoxical, a photo will only be real if it rejects objective reality and to the extent that it escapes from it. Objective reality cannot be reproduced by photography, it can only be interpreted by it, recreated by it and it is only in the measure in which this interpretation or re-creation of reality succeeds that a photo is true. «Representation» says Arnheim, «consists in creating by means of a particular medium, something equivalent in order of perception».

THREE FORMS OF MOVEMENT

We are now in possession of the first constitutive element of the cinema, photography.

But that is not all: good photos are not yet good films. Another very important element must be added, multiplying and extending almost infinitely the possibilities of the cinema; it is movement.

The cinema knows three kinds of movement, each possessing its own special property and opening up new perspectives.

There is in the first place movement within the actual limits of the chosen location, that is to say, the cinema is not confined to registering immobile images, but can endow these figures with the possibility of movement. The camera can produce not only the picture of a man walking but photograph the walk itself: one in fact, sees him cross the screen.

The second kind of movement which adds to our know-ledge of the cinema is the movement not only of the image but of the camera itself. This facility offers new possibilities. By turning the camera itself one can introduce into the scene some object which was not in the picture before. This allows, for example, certain effects of surprise to be obtained. I can take a picture of a room presenting nothing unusual: a slight movement of the camera shows, let us say, a monkey on a chair.

This principle of the mobility of the camera is very rich in its application. By letting the camera approach the object (tracking is the technical term) I can isolate a detail in a group. By means of a contrary movement I can make the detail, hitherto isolated, take its place among a large number of objects.

There is a third kind of movement, no longer within the limits of a determined set or of a specific person. It is the movement which results from a succession of different images or scenes, a succession due to «montage» (or editing, the customary term in English. Tr.). This may be slow or rapid and can impart to the film a determined rhythm. The succession of images in the course of a film allows, among other things, certain comparisons which are eminently suggestive.

In passing, note that the *impression* of motion will be the more often in inverse ratio to real movement. A tracking shot following a moving person gives a greater impression of stability than the same person crossing the motionless fields. On the contrary, a tracking shot towards an immobile person imparts motion to him.

It is by combining all these resources offered by movement with the resources offered by photography that the most truly cinematic effects are obtained. Here are some examples. Take THE CROWD by King V i dor. One recalls the sequence, taken from the great height of a stair way up which is mounting a little boy. By focussing on a small space, objects are made to appear greater and the person increases in size and detaches himself more and more from the massed group at the foot of the stairway.

The reverse procedure is seen at the end of the film when the little boy, now a young married man, is completely swallowed up by the crowd as the camera tracks away from him, leaving him one of an anonymous crowd at a circus. It is with this dismal scene that the film ends; the crowd has absorbed the person with all his ambitions.

This is a specifically cinematographic effect which no other artistic medium could express. The theatre, literature, painting evidently could translate these same emotions but would have to use means totally different.

Another example: the end of a film by the great producer, E. A. Dupont, LE CAP PERDU. A man and a woman are having a last discussion on the terrace of a café. The camera slowly moves backward and forward, first to the woman then to the man. Returning to the man's place

again we see only his empty seat, no one has seen him depart. It is the final parting. This is, once again, a specifically cinematographic effect. The succession of images is a powerfully suggestive method. There is an old film of P a b s t entitled DIE LIEBE DER JEANNE NEY in which a murder is described. We see a person standing upright, a hand brandishing a revolver, then, on the table, some trinkets shaking: the body in falling hits the table. The murder itself is not shown, the whole scene is suggested, recreated by the method of editing the film.

The use of all these resources has given birth to the alphabet of a cinematographic language which nowadays all the world understands easily without the need of learning each word, though each letter of this language is the result of a discovery. For example, the leaves of a calender flicking over.... time passes.... In rapid succession we see the syren of a steamer, railway lines, some well-known views, great towns. Sometimes these images are superimposed or are bound together in a kind of chain.... in any case, there is the strong suggestion of a voyage. A clock marks 3 o'clock. This is followed by a bell striking seven, or we see a wrist-watch telling this hour.... we know that four hours have passed.... etc., etc. This language which everyone can translate without difficulty is purely conventional and has nothing to do with reality. It is far removed from even the cleverest theatrical dialogue.

THE PLACE OF SOUND

The cinema is therefore primarily movement. Certain theorists have advanced the view that pure movement is the very essence of the cinema, independently of all other subject and that it finds its most perfect expression in the abstract or absolute film, freed from all narrative or even photographic substratum.

From what has been said, it will be seen that the silent film is sufficient in itself and constitutes a complete art. One can easily accept a silent cinema, interpreting objective reality by purely visual means. Sound must be thought of therefore as a completely secondary, sometimes irritating element in film.

The question as to whether sound is an essential element in film must be regarded as fruitless. The same can be said of the use of colour. There is no reason for limiting the art of the film to that of visuals, excluding colour a priori. The absence of colour and sound has always been considered by technicians as a technical imperfection. The fact that it has been possible to produce authentic works of art with imperfect instruments and that aesthetic theories founded on the concept of «black and white» photography have been formulated does not justify one in considering colour and sound as accessory elements in the cinema.

WHAT IS THE PROPER PLACE OF SOUND IN THE ART OF CINEMA?

In other words, what does the new element of sound contribute in addition to image and movement?

The first advantage is easily stated: the disappearance of sub-titles, that is to say, the possibility of replacing sub-titles by dialogue which does not destroy rhythm. In the first sound films this was the only advantage and the speaking film became 100% verbiage.

However, sound found a more reasonable and judicious part to play. In itself it is neither cinematographical or anti-cinematographical whatever the theorists may say to the contrary. The problem is actually to introduce sound into the film in such a way as to give it a specifically cinematographic purpose.

An exemple from music may make the point more clear. In music there is a distinction beteen harmony and counterpoint. In the cinema also, image and sound can be used in a manner corresponding either to harmony or counterpoint.

The harmonic construction would be the simple accompaniment of the visual by the corresponding synchronised sound. There is nothing specifically cinematic about it. One sees, for example, a train and one hears it at the same time. One sees and hears a person talking. This harmonic construction is evidently very simple and requires no great effort of imagination. (It will be understood that I am speaking only of the cinema: the comparison with music is not intended to be developed).

As for the polyphonic construction: it is extremely rich in possibilities. Here sound adds something to what is said by visuals alone. A simple example: A person is speaking but instead of showing us the person himself, we see his interlocutor and the reactions provoked in him by the sounds which we hear, in this case, the words of the other person.

In such a contrapontal montage, sound enters the realm of cinematographical media with its own proper effects differing altogether from any other means of expression.

Even film operas and musicals are perfectly admissable and offer extraordinary possibilities, always granting that there is something specifically cinematic in such films and that they are not mere copies of music hall or stage. A propos, it is curious to note that the first sound film which fully realised all the possibilities of sound was actually an operetta, the celebrated German Operetta entitled «DIE DREI VON DER TANKSTELLE» with Lilian Harvey and Willy Fritsch. The use that film can make of music-hall technique has been manifested in authentic fashion by the great American films like 42nd STREET, GOLD DIGGERS and other of the same genre, with their dazzling finales in which everything is gathered together in a veritable fairyland of beautiful lines and designs making one think that here we are on the road to absolute film.

Sound is not, therefore, an accessory to the cinema, it is, on the contrary, an essential element in the creation of the film work of art or complete documentary.

Take for example, the French documentary AUBER-VILLIERS. This is not simply a series of pictures to which the commentary and the songs which accompany it give a kind of background: the meaning of the visuals is really determined, not modified, by the sound track. Sound and visuals considered separately would, in this film, be equally pointless; they are two equivalent components of a unique reality, AUBERVILLIERS, the kind of film that cineastes have wished us to experience.

THE TRANSPOSITION OF SIGHT AND SOUND IN FILM

Here then are the means which the cinema uses to brave the world of reality and to make it re-live tor us. As we have said, photography alone is functionally incapable of reproducing reality as it is. It can only truly attain verity when it interprets exterior reality, recreating it according to its own proper nature.

In the world of cinema it is a striking fact that an artificial apparatus gives a greater impression of verity than does the simple registering of actuality.

It sometimes happens that a film makes use of material borrowed from a news reel, the visit of a celebrity.... in such a case it is impossible not to notice the unfortunate effect. The interpolated strip from the news film breaks the harmony of the film and sounds false even though it is in fact a registering of actuality. One is rudely jerked out of the reality created by the film to be plunged into another mood.

Where, on the other hand, an event is reconstituted in the studio it seems much more authentic than the same event photographed at the time and place it occurred. Everybody connected with the profession knows that a studio set can give a stronger impression of verity than the location itself. It is the same with sound. Radio technicians agree with this fact. A noise reconstructed by artificial means sounds much more faithful than a simple reproduction of the sound itself. Nothing, for example, sounds more unlikely than the direct registering of the sound of a motor.

A further step in this chain of ideas. One notices sometimes that a news reel has an irresistibly comic effect, all the more comic because it is unintended, and certainly not present in the reality. One cannot help observing when religious ceremonies are reported how the crowd with identical movements, get up and bang their knees to get rid of the dust, a natural gesture, but nevertheless comical.

Then there is the effect produced when a tennis match is reported: the uniform movement of hundreds of heads, made even more droll if one hears the toc-toc of the rackets in play, the invisible mechanism controlling the heads.

These burlesque results are inseparable from the simple reporting of reality which, in itself, may be far from amusing. You will easily recall memories of such and such a famous personage who, when seen on the screen provokes amusement though in himself there is nothing grotesque. This phenomenon is well-known enough to have a scientific description: one says that such and such a person is not photogenic. It is easy to see what prodigious resources this fact has for an intelligent director.

THE SUBJECT, PRIMORDIAL ELEMENT

We have reached the most important stage of this analysis: the role of the subject in the art of cinema. There is a tendency to regard it as accessory. The cinema should be before all if not exclusively a formal art. The subject must play a determining role. The cineaste only uses his art when drawn to do so by some determined subject. Apparently this point of view is not uncontested. It is said that the cinema is not a literary art, visual or dynamic, but a synthesis. constituting a new reality comprised of several modes of expression.

Take LE CHAPEAU DE PAILLE D'ITALIE by Labiche. One could hardly say that this was immortal French literature: it is an honest, slight comedy; nothing more. Nevertheless, René Clair has succeeded in drawing from it a film that is a veritable fireworks of a piece which

will remain unforgotten in the history of the cinema. Since then the subject has been used again with Fernandel in the principal part. Without belittling this excellent actor, too often badly employed, it must be said that the last version of CHAPEAU DE PAILLE D'ITALIE is but feeble platitude. I will not mention here an even worse German version of the same subject. It is clear, then, that using the same theme, all depends on the ability and skill of the director. Bromfield's fine novel THE RAINS CAME made a mediocre film. On the other hand, WUTHERING HEIGHTS, as adapted for the screen proved an American screen masterpiece.

It is necessary to avoid confusing subject and story. René Clair succeeded in producing a masterpiece from Labiche's CHAPEAU DE PAILLE D'ITALIE precisely because he left Labiche's story far behind and enriched it with a human content which he knew perfectly how to handle and for which, with astonishing virtuosity he used all the means placed at his disposal by the Seventh Art.

The cinema is not an exterior art. Photography, sound, colour, etc. are only means which the cineaste uses to say something. Nowadays, excessive importance is attached by critics to the purely formal aspect of the question. Films are praised or belittled not on account of their ideological content but solely from the point of view of certain cinematographic canons, fixed arbitrarily without considering the fact that the cinema is an art which is daily blossoming into something richer. Have we not heard certain critic-deny all worth to HENRY V on the pretext that S h a k es p e a r e's dialogue, the use of colour and the stylised interpretation are not cinematographic! This rejection of HENRY V is an example of formalism pushed to extreme logical limits.

In every art and in the cinema art no less, what one has to say is much more important than the manner in which one says it; the complete work of art consists of a perfect equilibrium between the two.

Unconsciously and guided by his artistic temperament, the cineaste makes use of and selects the material with which life presents him. This business of regrouping and synthesis results in a transformation bringing about precisely that state which is recognised as cinematographic and of which we have sketched the outlines. It follows, therefore, that in cinematographic art we are very far from the original objective reality.

OBJECTIVE REALITY IN THE CINEMA IS IMPOSSIBLE

There is an apparent contradiction to this principle in the case of the documentary film.

At the bottom of every documentary film there is a motif, an idea which governs the choice of this image in preference to that. The sincere and honest documentary producer tries to submit himself to reality; he aims at complete objectivity. But even the simple report of a journey has a subjective character about it; it is an interpretation.

It is only necessary to think of the formidable propaganda conveyed by Capra's informational films «WHY WE FIGHT», to understand that documentaries also are capable of objective reality.

If documentary films pre-suppose a certain personal attitude in face of life, that attitude will necessarily play

IN SEARCH OF A CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF THE FILM

an even greater role in the fiction feature film. An anecdote, if it is something more than a simple narrative of facts, is impersonal. It acquires its psychological content, its veritable reality from the place in which it is placed or from the human note which one discovers in it. Hence its importance derives from the choice of milieu, the special climate in which reality is approached.

This impression of verisimilitude is something other than that belonging to the films which custom now designates «realist». These films and also those belonging to the «neorealist» school only merit the title because they place their action on the objective plane.

I have already drawn attention to the fact that certain news items interpolated into a narrative film break the impression of smoothness and spoil the balance. Why? Because the film develops on a different plane and the introduction of any other reality inevitably breaks continuity and the impression of real life which the film had already created. This impression of reality depends on the film remaining homogeneous.

If we examine the new Italian realist films, we find an inverse impression is created.

Let us take PAISA, by Rosselini. In the sequence showing the Allies entering Rome, fragments of news reels have been used without upsetting the balance in the least, without spoiling the effect of actuality which the film intends to convey. Why? Because the film develops in the very atmosphere of actuality which it intends to present; it is in its self-appointed climate.

The so-called realist film draws its efficacy from its juxta-posing of actuality with the drama which it claims to be going on in that environment.

There is a striking example of this in the Italian film which some consider to be one of the precursors of this school of neo-realism. It is V is c o n ti's OBSESSIONE in which there is a very long scene taken in a public square in which the drama reaches its culminating point. Now as far as one can judge this scene was filmed without the people in it being aware of the fact. As an objective document such a scene should have been completely devoid of interest. But it acquires an extraordinary power from the simple fact of the presence of a woman, absolutely motionless behind a window. That is where the drama is being played out. But it gains significance because of the play of opposition.

Compare this scene with the analogous crowd scene in Julien D u v i v i e r's PANIQUE. In spite of its composite and apparently indifferent character, it never arouses the feeling of true realism, because the law of opposition does not operate; one senses the refinement of the crowd, its movement is minutely studied, but the whole thing lacks spontaneity; it is movement imposed from without whereas true life is movement governed from within.

It is not without interest to remark that this law of opposition between the violence of conflict and the indifference of the surroundings is to be found with all the perfection of actuality in certain American films of fifteen years ago: «THE CAPTAIN HATES THE SEA» and «FOUR HOURS TO KILL».

It is in this contrast that the dramatic power of the best scenes in «ROMA CITTA APPERTA» and «VIVERE IN PACE» lies.

What helps to give the subject authenticity, to make it stand out completely, is, to some extent, the fact that interest is shared among the secondary centres. Egocentricity is comparable with true realism because it does not consider man as part of the whole but as complete, isolated from his surroundings. The Italian cinema draws the best results from this submission to reality.

The British cinema also uses this trick of giving an impression of intense vitality by a judicious and precise attention to detail.

An analysis of such films as «BRIEF ENCOUNTER» and «THIS HAPPY BREED» reveals that each gesture, each bit of repartee, the least important incidental noise has been minutely studied. These films give an extraordinary impression of verisimilitude. The reason is that the British Cinema has behind it a solid tradition of documentary film. As a result it has developed a sure touch when it is a case of detail and observation.

The French cinema, on the other hand, is, of its nature, less given to the precise and limiting realism of films in the British sense. The French cinema is more abstract and therefore more universal. That is not to say that it is less real and alive. But it achieves reality and truth by other routes.

For the neo-realistic film is but one means, among many, of arriving at reality. Its realm is the concrete, this its arena. It is by means of inference that it brings about human repercussions. This sense of verity can be obtained by other means. The French cinema goes in for types, characters. The realism of «ANTOINE AND ANTOINETTE» is in another class to the realism of «QUATRE PASSI FRA LE NUVOLE». Nevertheless, the impression of verity is as great in both cases because the film maker keeps logically to the plan which he has adopted.

It is by means of abstraction that the French Cinema reaches true humanity. It is universal.

The American cinema deals with the mass mind; hence its poverty from the point of view of human appeal.

The American cinema reaches its greatest height when it has the courage to deal with real concrete things and to get genuine human values out of them. For example in films like «THE OXBOW INCIDENT» or «THE GRAPES OF WRATH».

The Cinema interprets reality by adhering to an exact plan.

What gives an impression of life is not the plan which has been chosen but the logic which binds one to the plan adopted. That is what constitutes the power behind «MON-SIEUR VERDOUX» for example, that implacable logic driving on to absurdity, the point of departure being once fixed.

It is because they had no respect for this logic that certain recent films have had such resounding collapses. «LES PORTES DE LA NUIT» suffered from a break in equilibrium and, as a result, a loss of vitality, as between the poetic climate adopted and the realistic procedure followed out by its director.

Continuing this order of ideas: true realism is possible in every kind of film. An extreme example is «HENRY V». The film opens in the best British documentary tradition; a reconstitution of a representation of «HENRY V» at the Globe Theatre in London. Laurence Olivier plays

the part of an actor playing the part of «HENRY V». Everything is in the best realistic tone: decor, dazzling wigs, royal draperies obviously from the theatrical property box, etc. Then at a given moment there is a prodigious transposition: Laurence Olivier ceases to be an actor interpreting a part and becomes the personage himself: insensibly from one objectively real plan the film has passed to another reality; Shakespearean reality. Here all is treated rigourously; authentic Shakespearean dialogue: stylised decor and play; harmony of colours. All this has no contact with objective reality but is extraordinarily rich and vital: The film has adapted itself completely to this new reality.

In the same way, the film «LES ANGES DU PECHE» conveys a sense of depth and intense interior value because it holds rigorously to the plan decided upon. And this plan necessarily supposes an extremely austere setting, a stripping away of literary quality, an objectively unreal dialogue,

which, in any other psychological climate would have been absolutely insupportable.

CONCLUSION

We conclude: the cinema is unable to attain realism in itself but does so interpretively in virtue of its function as a visionary, seeing the world as it is, objectively real. From this creation of new and ideal reality no order is excluded.

True humanity may be reached by every means, by the way of realism as well as by poetry.

It is in this that the true mission of the cinema consists: to place this creative power at the service of Beauty and Truth, that is to say, at the service of God.

Leo Lunders, O. P.

Michel de SAINT-PIERRE

Man of Letters, Film Critic of "Etudes" and of "Temoignage Chrétien", Paris.

THE QUARREL OF THE INTELLECTUALS

WITH REGARD TO THE CINEMA

Once there was a poet who was tired of this old world. He was called Guillaume Apollinaire. Before the war of 1914—19 he said of the film producer Georges Méliès: «Monsieur Méliès and I have almost the same profession. We charm material things.» To find higher praise one would travel the world in vain, and this poet was French. Unfortunately, the seventh Art has not met with such a good reception from most of the gentlemen of wit. In a book published more than 20 years ago, «The Art of the Cinema», I have come across certain words of Bernard S h a w which I cite for you benefit: «The Cinema could become an art on one condition, suppress the pictures altogether and only leave the sub-titles.» Louis Salambert wrote at nearly the same time: «Inspirer of crime, propagator of bad morals, the cinema imperils the health of the soul.»

Then spoke Georges D u h a mel, and it was dangerous in a different way for this growing art,

because to his inditement Duhamel brings the mastery of profound thought, and the vigour of a magnificent talent. Listen to him - for him the cinema is «canned pictures», «it represents the ease of resting one's limbs and the musical gutter which carries away like refuse, the fragments of our most beautiful dreams.» «And the pictures pass, that is the word, but all work worthy of its name should try to remain.» Somewhere else he says of the cinema: «It is a diversion of slaves, a passtime of miserable creatures, brutalised by their work and their worries — poisoned on purpose, food of a multitude which the forces of Moloch have judged and condemned, and which finishes by debasing — a spectacle which calls for no effort, and which presents no sequence in one's ideas, which raises no question, kindles no passion, awakens no light in the heart's depths, excites no hope except the absurd one of being one day a Hollywood star.»

It is true that Duhamel adds «This terrible machine, elaborately dazzling with music, luxury and human voices, this machine of stupidity and disintegration, counts to-day amongst the amazing forces of the world». But to end, «I would give all the cinema libraries of the world, including what the professions of this «art» call their «classics», for a play of Molière, a picture of Rembrandt, a Bach fugue» «This still-born art», he continues We have stressed at length the testimony of the author of Pasquier, for he establishes to our mind one of the most important points that has been thrown into the controversy but that is not all - Louis Bertrand says «I can give no opinion of the cinema, as I have never entered one.» Théo V a r let, the worthy man, says «The cinema is corrupted from its beginning by its terribly base appeal to the public taste.» And Monsieur Paul Eluard (whose social status, they say, is still that of a poet) «The place the cinema holds in my life? It holds no place.» Maurice Donnay going straight to the point, says he does not like the cinema. Albert Thibaudet sees in it «the degradation of literature in the physical chemical sense.» «The Cinema» says Edouard Estaunié, «What is it after all? Merely an adjusted magic lantern.» Andre Suarès speaks with disgust of the «celebrated monkeys of the screen» and brands the «ignoble heart of Charlie Chaplin.»

One would need a whole book to write all the rash opinions that writers have either held or written on the subject of the cinema. The respectable M. Doumic, on his side, professed a great contempt for it. Paul Valéry, asked his opinion, made this ambiguous, prudent and toadying reply, «Once I was asked if I thought the cinema was an art, I replied that I attached no importance to this word - painting is an art, and there are many bad paintings, therefore it matters very little if it is an art or not» — but to me who am an intolerant apostle of the cinema Valéry said one night, raising his clear eyes underneath their bushy eyebrows. «Your cinema is completely futile, besides I never go to one.» One has been able to gather this profession of ingenuous faith on the innocent lips of Henri Bordeaux «I do not think that the discovery of the cinema since the beginning of my literary career has in any way altered my work.»

As to Paul Souday, he has committed himself still more dangerously, «The films», writes he, «twaddle.» He goes on «The cinema is the droppings of a goat.» Then logically developing his thought — (if I dare say so) — «of necessity limited and superficial as a medium, the cinema is vulgarised by its purpose — the same films are shown in the smallest villages of the five parts of the world; to what level must it be degraded to please these enormous crowds?»

Here is something strange «The least important villages». Is not this point precisely an idea which would make the fat old Michelet quiver with joy? Because Michelet said «I dream of an immensely popular theatre satisfying the peoples thought, which will reach even the smallest villages.»

And if one does not work for the masses, then for whom does one work?

A Tolstoï, a Renan, a Whitman prophesying the event of new works would agree with Michelet. He opened the eyes of visionaries on virgin soil. They, who could never have imagined what moving pictures would be, announced «An art which will satisfy the aspirations of our time...»

And yet, presented with the first miracle of the cinema Bernard Shaw, Duhamel, Estaunié, Souday, Bordeaux, Thibaudet and Valéry, blaspheme.

Wherefore this indignation? this touchiness? These men were or are typically bourgeois — in the broadest sense of the word. They represent in particular two tendencies which remain strong among us — firstly timidity when faced with something new, confronted with the potentialities of the cinema. Salvation is not possible without the spirit — secondly — the dislikes characteristic of an intellectual class towards popular arts — the real lessons of humanism are forgotten.

* * *

But it would by unfair to cling to this gloomy picture. In a remarkable work where he collects, classifies and comments on various texts published on the cinema, Marcel l'Herbier amused himself by contrasting the contradictory opinions emanating from fine brains thus: «The cinema? A frightening return to barbarism.» René Doumic. 1925. «The Cinema? A new era for humanity.» Pierre Seize. 1922. However one cannot go too far in this game without falsifying the discussion. Unfortunately, up till now the seventh art has found more contempt than praise among the intellectuals. We still have great authors who were in favour of it. I have already cited Apollinaire. Blaise Cendrars whose colourful language we already know said one day in respect of film photography: «It is rubbish, rhododendron, but it is a great mystery.» From De Roland Dorgelès, these words which we appreciate «The cinema exercises a deep influence on the minds of youth — it teaches clearness of expression, quickness of speech, it is a valuable lesson.» From the pen of P. F. Quesnoy, «The cinema has been born for us, it is more than an art, it is a new language, a means of expression that our century has been seeking for a long time already.» And Lucien Descaves wrote in «Le Journal» in 1912 «The cinema invites one to travel, it is, so to say, a mobile museum thanks to which a child can learn much that he did not known before.» André Maurois (La Poésie du Cinéma) asserts: «The cinema is an art about which we can think in the same way as we think of music and of painting, with the same emotion, the same strong desire to see it produce the works we are fond of.» And completing his thought seasoned with his well-known exquisite humour «THE GOLD RUSH is the first example since the «Chanson de Roland» of a poem equally accessible to both Crainquebille and M. Georges Bédier.»

Now André Malraux. The great novelist does not hesitate to give his opinion of Hollywood nor to let himself go in the most unexpected definitions, «A star is a woman capable of creating a great number of converging scenarios.» From the same author this important text, «The novel still seems to have considerable advantage over the film; the possibility of getting inside a person. But on the one hand the modern novel seems to analyse its characters less and less in their moments of crisis — on the other hand, a dramatic psychology (Shakespeare's and to a great extent Dostoïevski's) where secrets are revealed either by their acts or by half confessions, is probably no less revealing than analysis. Finally, the problem of every complex character if it is to be expressed as it can be on the screen, through the mystery of human features, helps to give to a work the answer to the question put to God about life, whence some dreams attain their greatness.»

I have said that the seventh art often aroused contempt among the intellectuals, but it is only fair to say that little by little the master minds are turning towards it. From 1920 until the war, this evolution was already perceptible. It is still more now that the cinema preoccupies and occasionally disconcerts the most contemptuous of the highbrows. One can see the young or old author asking himself when writing his new book, what chances he will have of tempting the producer. Shakespeare has been produced: HENRY V, HAMLET, OTHELLO, MACBETH. Charles Spaak, that vigorous woodcutter, goes to the forest of Dostorevski and no one protests: («L'IDIOT», «L'HOMME AU CHAPEAU ROND»). More and more often one sticks the label «great» to names such as Orson Welles, Laurence Olivier, René Clément, S. M. Eisenstein, John Ford, René Clair and

The expression «Seventh Art» lends itself to violent discussion, but it no longer makes anyone laugh — and good authors, even great ones (La Varende, Jean Anouilh, Pierre Véry,

Prévert, Jean-Paul Sartre, Jean Cocteau) don't think it beneath them to write for the cinema.

Now I am going to visit François Mauriac. In the first place I ask him what is his attitude with regard to the cinema. It is a charming man with a gentle smile who answers my question. He draws my attention to the fact that his son, Claude, writes an important column in the «Figaro» on the cinema, and that he writes with fire — I am therefore «in the know», «Even» he adds maliciously, «the films I haven't seen.» «During the great period of the Silent Films» goes on the author of «Genitrix», «I was fascinated by the cinema, fascinated to such a point that «Destiny» was written with the thought of having it filmed in my mind. Remember «Thérèse Desqueyroux», during a long drive in a carriage, then in the train, she recalls her story, of which the various episodes take form in her mind and reconstruct themselves. Is this not cinema technique? Unfortunately I have lost the state of grace with the «talkies». What about twisting stories, especially when it deals with period films.» I can't help laughing when I hear Louis XIV, Cleopatra or Dagobert speak.» M. Mauriac adds at once with a propitiatory manner, «I don't reject the cinema as a whole, it deceives me at the moment; perhaps it has some beautiful surprises in store. I know Maurice Cloche - I do not accept everything of his «MONSIEUR VINCENT», I must, however, recognize that «MONSIEUR VINCENT» has been made to live. The film which I have liked the best? «JEUNES FILLES EN UNIFORME». Immediately I interrupt him, not without a shade of triumph, «JEUNES FILLES EN UNI-FORME» was a talking picture and M. Mauriac with his wonderful sincerity remains silent, disarmed. «It is true» he said «A talking film, I didn't remember . . . the cinema hasn't said its last word.»

On behalf of «The International Film Review» I asked Daniel Rops, Henri de Montherlant and Henri Troyat their opinion of the cinema — would they give their respective attitudes. I received from them the following answers - «There are people» writes Daniel-Rops, who send it to the devil, there are others who say they are mad about it, as to me, it does not seem to deserve either this excessive honour nor this indignity. It is still an incomplete art, which has not yet found its final formula, which cannot yet fly by itself, in a word it has not yet been able to formulate an aesthetic, nor its laws. In its researches as well as in its mistakes, it has sometimes excelled. Used by a first rate artist such as Olivier, the result is a revolutionary masterpiece such as «HAMLET». Used by X or Y the result is this depressing strip where psychoanalysis for shop girls links together with the cultivation of the turnip. It is still in France that I find the greatest number of intelligent films, not always successful, but nearly always showing some kind of research. Even a half failure like «LES DAMES DU BOIS DE BOULOGNE» has an undeniable value as a piece of audacious innovation (as well as showing the pathetic smile of Elina L a b o u r-d e t t e).»

«How much imagination, creative power, finesse and thought is there in the «SYMPHONIE PASTORALE» of Delannoy, in Maurice Cloche's dear and moving «MONSIEUR VINCENT», in the pictures directed by Autan-Lara, or by Leenhardt:—All that is not for nothing. I believe in the future of the cinema, in its future as an intelligent art and I believe especially in the French cinema.»

Montherlant had said before, «The cinema could be a wonderful means of education, but it has become one of the most debasing factors of the 20th Century.»

He remembers having said it, as he writes to me now, «I have affirmed formerly that the cinema was «one of the most debasing factors of the 20th century — I have not altered my opinion except to point out that, taken as a whole, it would be excessive and unjust — the cinema saves itself by some of its documentary films and a few of its cartoons and by some of its trick films.» «Some of Walt Disney's like «GRAND PARADE», «BAMBI», perhaps even «SNOW WHITE» seem to me to be an interesting contribution to life in the 20th Century — true freshness and real poetry in the middle of the bogus freshness, and bogus poetry of imposters.»

If one knows the author of «MAITRE DE SANTIAGO» as I know him this comparison of Montherlant with Donald Duck amazes you and gives you pleasure.

And here is a letter from Henri Troyat: «The cinema regarded as a means of expression, awakes in me very similar feelings to those I felt last year during the crossing of the great plains of the American West. It seemed to me, confronted with this vast deserted area, to be the land of hope, and that the future of the world started there between sky and earth and not in the overcrowded and worn out towns - that after all everything was possible in this place for men of good will — the possibilities of the cinema as well as the possibilities of the Steppes are enormous, incalculable — I see the first proof of it in the fact that pictures go out of fashion so quickly. Progress in artistic conception, technical improvements are so great from one decade to another, that its rhythm is like that of a conquest. The principal enemies of true cinema seem to me to be hide-bound audiences and capitalists who are afraid of imagination. The great period of discoveries will start the day one will have found the means of making great films at minimum cost, and when artists are freed from the control of financiers. Cheap films will be the essential condition of quality; which is the exact opposite of what is happening in the industrial cinema of to-day.»

Henri Troyat thinks smilingly, and the last paradox in his letter is due to his smile, but I know producers would profit from thinking it over. All this brings us back to the eternal debate on the nature of the cinema, a debate in which it is impossible henceforth to remain indifferent—listen then to Malraux's lesson:

«The Cinema», he says «speaks to the masses and the masses like a story, good or bad» Malraux is profoundly convinced that the greatness of the Seventh Art is to be popular. Stories appeal to the heart of the masses. This is what he writes, calling the cinema to a new crusade: «The populace are far from preferring always what is best. Nevertheless they often recognise it — what did they understand when they listened to the sermons of St. Bernard? Something else from what he said? Very likely. But dare we overlook what was understood by them when this hitherto unknown voice penetrated so deeply into their hearts?» Then the interesting outburst ceases and Malraux concludes abruptly, obsessed by a truth which also haunts us: «In other respects the cinema is an industry.»

Michel de Saint Pierre.





By means of a moving camera Helped by the play of light

THE CINEMA BRINGS
THE STONE TO LIFE



«LE BOURREAU»

(THE EXECUTIONER)

School of Rheims XIV Century

«Sculptures Gothiques»

(«GOTHIC, SCULPTURES»)

Documentary by Maurice CLOCHE Photos by Claude RENOIR

By André BAZIN

Cinema Critic to

«Parisien Libéré» and «L'Ecran Français», Paris.

INDIGENCE, SERVITUDE AND GREATNESS AN APPROACH

TO THE CRITICISM OF FILMS

It is not my intention to define and resolve all the problems of French film criticism. The task would be worth while but is more onerous than at first appears. I should like simply to put forward a few considerations.

The first strikes at the impotence and futility of film criticism in general. It is enough for the cinema critic to compare his efficacy with that of his dramatic colleagues to realise his own ineffectiveness. The consequences of a good or a bad theatrical press-notice are indeed inevitable and obvious. Subject to a few rare exceptions — as when for example Jean de Latras is concerned it is the Press which allows a piece to survive its first performances. Conversely, a unanimously hostile criticism can annihilate. Then, of course, star performers are important to a theatre. A play may run several weeks longer than it deserves because it stars a celebrated actor, although he alone will not suffice to make the play a great success. Dramatic criticism carries, then, a real responsibility — it is aware that the greater part of its public trusts it, and that on its verdict depends the fate of a play. Hence we must be all the more exacting towards dramatic criticism. However, it is not our present duty to bring it to trial; enough that we have stressed its practical importance.

Now in contrast take a completely insignificant film like «ALI BABA ET LES QUARANTE VOLEURS» (Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves) towards which the critics were unanimously unfavourable. It is an unhappy fact that this film's career was hardly at all affected as a result of adverse criticism. It would be easy to quote many similar examples. Naturally, good films get a good Press and achieve great success though not because of the critics. The counter test operating in the next example has been observed over and over again: certain films have been upheld by the critics as exceptional and remarkable works yet have never achieved commercial success; for instance most of the French films of Jean Vigo and Jean Renoir, in particular «LA REGLE DU JEU». I know of only one circumstance where critics play a decisive part in

a film's destiny; it is when some work of quality, with a scenario able to appeal to a wide public is launched with scarcely any advance publicity. It is incontestable that the Press has assured the success of «THE LAST CHANCE» and of «QUATRE PAS DANS LES NUAGES» which appeared almost unheralded in the little picture palaces of the Champs Elysees and which showed for the first few days to empty houses. Yet in reality, in this case the critics did but replace the non-existent publicity. The qualities of such films plus oral propaganda have done the rest. A film might well have been a masterpiece; nevertheless if the story had not pleased the first few thousand spectators all the trumpetings of the critics would not have prevented the posters being torn down after a fortnight.

A recent enquiry covering the Paris area showed that only 24% of audiences patronize the Cinema as a result of criticisms and publicity in the newspapers. I should be generous in attributing to the critics a quarter of this 24%. For newspaper publicity is without doubt much more important to the producer than this or that writer's opinion. At bottom, pressmen know very well that film distributors care hardly at all whether their film is honourably or dishonourably mentioned as long as it is mentioned. A photograph and twenty odd lines of print - no matter whether in praise or blame - constitute very useful free publicity. In Paris, then, a maximum of 5 or 6% of the spectators go to see a film because of what critics have written about it. Now Paris is certainly the one city in France, if not in the world, where criticism is most widely read and heeded. It is evident that in the provinces people frequent the cinemas from habit; they like a particular picturehouse, or flock to see their favourite stars or are influenced by the talk of friends who have seen the film, rather than by articles in the Paris Press, which are, in any case, usually forgotten when once a film is released. Considering the French market then, as a whole, we should certainly not be below the actual figure in ascribing only about 3 to 4% of all cinema patrons to the influence of film critics, surely a negligable quantity.

This said, may I express my wonder

- (1) At the existence of an acknowledged Film Criticism.
- (2) At the size of its audience.

At its existence — for there does exist in France a school of Cinema critics which is honest, free, independent, and on the whole, intelligent. This last epithet alone allows of discussion; I shall return to it; as for the other qualities, none would question them. The great majority of French film critics belong to the «French Association of Film Critics» whose rules absolutely forbid its members to concern themselves with publicity. A disciplinary council watches jealously over the enforcement of these rules. It has, however, very little to do, for — and this point is one of the few wherein the French Press has made undeniable progress the critics are ticklishly intolerant of the slightest pressure exerted by editor or publicity section of a paper. So in the main they are left in peace. They are quite free to drag through the mud the very film that splashes an enormous advertisement across the same page. Before the war, it was not so, and homage is due to those who, like Jean Walls and Léon Moussinac and a few others, were the pioneers of independent criticism. Their competence allied to an examplary integrity, have done much to form our present-day belief that a critic is not to be bought.

It may be asked, then, why the newspapers treat themselves to the luxury of independent criticism. There we have a little psychological problem of the Press which is interesting to unravel. It is necessary, doubtless, to keep count of the other traditional and established branches of criticism. Also, paradoxically, the critics' verdict lends a certain support to publicity. If I decry a film, the distributor cares nothing, but if I speak well of it he will hasten to quote my criticism in his publicity panel, and this reference will have the tremendous advantage of being accepted by the public as coming from a disinterested judge. The man of business thus derives double benefit from not having bought me - my honesty costs nothing and is worth much; my culpability — for a price — would be less profitable. There is also the newspaper's point of view and the safeguarding of its artistic standing. It can all the better exploit its publicity if its readers feel that, after all, their paper stands for a sort of intellectual detachment where liberty of judgement flourishes untrammelled. Still, these factors existed before the war; if, however, independent criticism was less common then, we must attribute the progress made to an improvement in professional morality due to the critics themselves.

As to those influenced by film-criticism, I have already tried to point out their numerical insignificance compared with the enormous cinema

public. But this evaluation is quite relative. If, instead of comparing the number so influenced with the total number of film-goers one limits oneself to consideration of the actual numbers, one is struck by their importance. I estimated just now at about 5 or 6% the proportion of spectators who defer to critics. Take then a moderately successful French film. It is seen by five or six million people, so that between fifty and sixty thousand of them read and give heed to filmcriticism. I doubt if theatrical or literary criticism can lay claim to a much higher figure. «But» it may be objected, «there are fewer plays and novels published than films.» That is incorrect. In reality, literary criticism, by its very definition, concerns itself only with works of some quality and systematically ignores a mass of third class writing on the same level as a great number of films.

The fact is that film-criticism is in the same position as is the Cinema in regard to Literature. The latter, developed through ages of evolution has, in the course of time, become subdivided and stratified into distinct kinds, each addressed to very well-defined classes of readers. To speak of contemporary French literature is to speak of Gide, Malraux, Georges Duhamel and Roger Martin du Gard, but not of M. Jean de la Hire In thinking of the French Cinema one evokes the names of Marcel Carné, René Clair, Georges Clouzot and Jean Renoir, although their works do not represent the tenth part of French production; yet the critics deal with all the films because the public as a whole goes to see them all. It is rather as if the critics attached to a great literary periodical gave as much attention to «Betrayed-and-abandoned-bythe-soldier-boy» as to the «Ulysses» of James

Joyce! If literary criticism has become specialised it is because a book may appear to a group of readers limited in number yet numerous enough to justify an edition. One may, however, note the beginnings of specialisation in film-criticism, especially in the magazines. The paper shortage having reduced the space available to criticism, the latter is thereby debarred from dealing with all films, and so picks out the best and ignores the mediocre. This practice is becoming more and more general and has contributed, I think, to the evolution of criticism in the Cinema. But again, only a limited public is involved and the method is never applied in daily papers or Film magazines. In these, criticism has two aims: (a) to assess the artistic value of a film and (b) to help the reader to decide whether or no he will want his money back after the show. These two pre-occupations have practically no common measure. That is seen by examining the

statistics of film exploitation. Torn between these two obsessions — the aesthetic and the purely informative — the critic is tempted to yield to the second for in preferring the first he would disappoint the majority of his readers.

Yet even insofar as a specialised and independent criticism may function, its intellectual status is very different from that of literary criticism. The latter has had more than a hundred years' experience — to go back only as far as Sainte Beuve - two hundred if we include his French and German precursers of the 18th century. For upwards of fifty years it has assimilated the stores of university technique in research and analysis in which the greater number of literary critics have been schooled. Even when it re-acts against the Sorbonne it remains its outcome. The same applies to the Theatre. But in the case of the Cinema there is no tradition, not a single critical method which has stood the test of time. Hence, in our magazines it is often writers and literary critics who handle the Cinema in virtue of a tacit but implied prejudice: Those able to do much can do less. Since everybody goes to the Cinema, everybody ought to be able to discuss it; all the more reason that a critic should. Thus is born a distinguished impressionist type of criticism which learns its trade by degrees but remains perforce branded by its origin. One must credit it with good taste, good will and, above all, a sincere love of the Cinema. Although it may bear the stigma of its artless paternity it contributes indisputably to the defence of novelty, of audacity and of research. We cannot always say as much for those dramatic critics who take a delight in being either surly or ironically condescending.

An attentive study of the history of the Cinema since 1940 can, however, remark the emergence of what may be called a scientific tendency in criticism. This evolution is in a great measure due to the publication of certain technical works on the Cinema. The monumental general-History of Georges Sadoul, critic to «Les Lettres Fran-gaises», is doubtless the principal one; yet it seems that the subject is in the air, for the last five years have witnessed the multiplication of serious books on the Cinema. There will soon be hardly a French publisher who will not have sponsored one or several such books — albeit very often difficult of access. This tendency is apparent in a minor degree, although still vigorous, in England especially, and in Italy. It is part of a movement denoting interest in the intellectual problems of the Cinema, one active and interesting manifestation being the growing number of Cinema Clubs. These subscribe to standard publications and place them at the disposal of their members. So the «scientific» critics write for this public also. Hence, during the last five or six years there has developed a

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situation partly comparable to that of Literature: a special public for specialised criticism.

Unfortunately, the matter is not quite as simple, for there are no specialised cinemas, and no matter how «scientific» or distinguished the critics, they are bound to deal with films unworthy of their attention. Here is, then, the problem: how are we to apply a fairly balanced criticism to cinematographic productions in general?

In other words, criticism has to deal with an excess of heterogeneous material. Consider such relatively successful films as «LE DIABLE AU CORPS» or «LA SYMPHONIE PASTORALE». We have there an obvious and unmistakable criterion: that of fidelity to reality. It is much the same with Jacques Copeau's adaptation of «LES FRERES KARAMAZOV». The same quality of authenticity is here apparent. But what have they in common with «LADY FROM SHANGHAI», for example, or «CHRISTMAS IN JULY» by Preston Sturges; and if we go back a little, with «THE PILGRIM» (Charlie Chaplin) or the last Marx Brothers film or «MONSIEUR VERDOUX» — stopping short of extremes how is it that certain film masterpieces, contemporary with the earliest successes of André Gide or Paul Claudel, are nothing but vulgar knockabout farces or feebly sentimental melodrama? And yet are Buster Keaton or Griffiths lesser artists than their literary contemporaries?

Into a few decades the Cinema seems to have condensed the evolution that the other arts have spent ages in accomplishing. It seems as if it had to catch up on the time lost. The landmarks that Literature and the Theatre have passed on their journey, from the Troubadours' songs to the novel, from the «Ulysses» of Homer to the «Ulysses» of James Joyce, from ancient classical tragedy to the modern theatre - the Cinema has passed, too, with some ellipses rather difficult to explain. In the bosom of their civilisation the Cinema epitomises the history of the Arts as the foetus in the womb evolves through every stage of the animal kingdom. Once again, this comparison gives but an incomplete idea of the complexity of the problem, for Homer, Shakespeare and Racine were successive in time; they lived in their Art's own epoch. With the Cinema it is rather as if the Song of Roland followed after Faux-Monnayeur, or as if Corneille had read Henry Bernstein, for the natural laws of evolution in the Cinema are not the constant tendencies of the evolved Arts. The years 1921 to 1930 beheld the fantastic triumph of Rudolph Valentino, the birth (to films) of the two Venuses Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich, the Russian revolutionary epic, the self-expression on stage and screen of the German school and the début of French surréalism. Yet at this very moment in America most of the local cinemas present a triple programme whose composition shows a kind of stratification in decreasing order of solidity; the last film of Category C differing scarcely at all, in spite of technical advances, from a 1920 production. There may be seen real «Westerns» conceived and shaped in 1948 according to the good old legendary traditions of the silent films. In addition to the influence of the evolved Arts is added, moreover, a liability to new and ever newer technique. The silent film had, after less than thirty years, reached a point of perfection seemingly supreme. In a few months the advent of the «Talkie» wiped out these artistic triumphs. To-day Technicolour; tomorrow the stereoscopic and televised picture will compromise the results of twenty years of sound films.

In face of an artistic phenomenon so calumniated, and whose economic, sociological and psychological aspects are in such an inextricable tangle, what can be expected of a Critical Faculty devoid, as it is, of any method backed by tradition?

The wonder is that it has, so far, made so few mistakes! By the end of the epoch of the silent films there existed in France a school of criticism, whose judgements are to-day confirmed by history. From Louis Delluc to Léon Moussinac and including René Jeanne, Georges Charensol and Alexander Arnoux, French cinema criticism, born immediately after the first world-war, has appraised the importance, one by one, as they appeared, of the works of Chaplin, Griffiths, Stroheim, René Clair and Abel Gance; it testified to the significance of the German, Swedish and Soviet schools. At the outside we may query a few of its enthusiastic pronouncements on certain early French films which have not survived the last twenty years. The limited public which relied on such criticism was not deceived as to the quality of the works recommended.

But this type of criticism was upset, as was the Cinema itself, by the introduction of sound films. In the same way as many producers of silent films have failed to maintain in the newer art the high level of talent or genius which they had formerly evinced, the French critical school — with a few exceptions — lost between 1928 and 1930, the system of evaluation so conscientiously elaborated. Up to the second world war, France had some good cinema critics, intelligent, shrewd and sincere; but she had no «School of Criticism».

Has she one to-day? I would not venture to say, although the «French Association of Film Critics» comprises about 150 members; yet there is, since the war, a distinct evolutionary development. There exist at least some tendencies, almost

some critical movements which allow of the hope that they will become — in a few years — more exactly crystallised. I should be averse to mention, let alone classify the men responsible, not because I am personally concerned, but because many of them partake of several tendencies awaiting further development and precision. Perhaps, if I may be bold enough to touch on a personal matter, it is permissable to refer to the controversy opened by Georges Sadoul in «La Nouvelle Critique» about an article of mine on Wyler. Georges Sadoul accused me, and Claude Mauriac, of attaching too much importance to formal problems bearing upon the subject. In self-defence I should have to enter into details; and I have only quoted this personal example as indicative of a weak spot in the new French criticism. In the opposite camp to Georges Sadoul would be most likely ranged such critics as Roger Leenhardt, Alexandre Astruc and Pierre Scherer. In a specialised paper like «L'Ecran Frangais» which musters a large force of critics, the attentive reader will distinguish different shades of opinion, certain constant factors in a critical scheme which do more than indicate personal taste.

What will emerge from this state of transition it is difficult to foretell. The majority of critics will remain, we hope, journalists of taste, cultivated and intelligent; a minority only will classify themselves according to certain conceptions of criticism. If these conceptions are to be of value and fruitful they must include many more critical notions than are indispensable to literary criticism. The new criticism will have to work out a theory of the impact of Art on Society as applied to the Cinema; carry out research hitherto scarcely attempted into the psychology of the spectator; be capable even of social and individual psycho-analysis and be expert in appraising plots, scenarios, actors and styles in order merely to glimpse at the significance and rightful status of such and such a film. Only then will it be possible to begin an aesthetic appreciation properly so-called with some chance of success. We are entering upon a new epoch in Cinema criticism, a period when understanding of the Cinema — always indispensable — will no longer suffice. The birth and rapid development of the «Centre International de Filmologie» of French origin is an advance indication.

Not, of course, that the critical science of tomorrow will have to be a «Filmology»; but it can no more ignore a prodigiously complex mass of preliminary explorations than can an Albert Thibaudet ignore the works on History and Philology.

André Bazin

HAGIOGRAPHY IN OUR TIMES

Should lives of Saints be filmed?

The great success that has come to «MON-SIEUR VINCENT» in France and the welcome which New York has given for several months to «JOAN OF ARC» by Victor Fleming are facts that have definite importance both from the moral and the material points of view.

The success of these films cannot, we think, be attributed solely to the prestige of two first class actors. Granted the thrilling creation of Pierre Fresnay, the talent which Ingrid Bergman brought to the part of the French heroine, contributed largely to the interest aroused by the saintly personages whom they incarnated. A film biography, like a literary biography touches us first because of the character which is there revealed. The task of the actor, therefore, is of primary importance since upon him rests to some extent the dramatic worth of the film. But other factors enter in the case of the two films mentioned to explain a success which, both in France and in America, has been among the most considerable ever known. We will return to this point a little later.

Without going too deeply into the reason for this sudden infatuation of the public for hagiography on the screen, the producers have quickly exploited this vein. Up to the present several films are in course of production, some are finished, in which the hero is a well known and popular saint.

Based on a scenario by René Jolivet, «SORCIER DU CIEL» is a life of John Marie Vianney, Curé d'Ars, directed by Marcel Blisthène. A recent book by Georges Buraud «Le Drame du Curé d'Ars», admirably recounted the astonishing spiritual destiny of this saint. Elsewhere, Gilbert Dupé, is working on «APOTRE DU GIBET», after «the prodigious life of St. John Bosco, shepherd, acrobat, waiter, baker, black-smith, cabinetmaker, professor, priest, writer, prophet and diplomat, each by turn...» (We quote the publicity blurb of this production.) Then André Legrand is at present working on a script on the life of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, which has already had, if our memory serves us, the honours of the screen. Abroad, it suffices to mention the project of a film on St. Francis of Assisi which Augusto Genina intended to make with Italian and French actors, a project now abandoned but one which Roberto Rossellini is considering doing for «Universalia» some time in the future.

Before examining the phenomenon of this hagiographical flowering, we may recall that it is not a new thing in the history of the cinema. From the beginning, «sacred scenes» and evocations of the Passion, notably I. N. R. I. from the German school, found a welcoming public. There have been numerous lives of Joan of Arc, both in France and in America. One remembers the last two, «LA VIE MERVEILLEUSE DE JEANNE D'ARC» by Marc de Gastygne, in which Simone Genevois was the star, and above all, «LA PASSION DE JEANNE D'ARC», by Carl Dreyer, an exceptional film of the silent period in which Falconetti made a very moving Saint. Antomare had already made a «ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI» in Italy. Then more recently we find Leon Poirier's «L'APPEL DU SILENCE» about Père de Foucauld, whose beatification process is at present opening in Rome, and «LE PELERIN DE L'ENFER», about Father Damien who devoted his life to the lepers at Molokaï where he died in 1889. In Mexico, in addition to a Mary Magdalen, dealing with the time of Christ, a St. Francis of Assisi has also been made, though like the two previous films it has not yet been released in France.

As we see, film hagiography has satisfied itself up to the present with a few representative subjects. Now a new prospect opens and the projects we have already mentioned at the beginning of this article truly point the way to a sort of «Golden Legend» of the cinema. It is in this sense that we shall consider the problem to begin with.

Two things have to be noticed at the outset. Hagiography originally developed as a result of popular fervour. The desire to know about the life of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin and of the Saints are at the root of all literature and the theatre in Christian countries. In France the Mystery Plays, astonishing pieces transmitted from monastery to monastery; in Italy the «Fioretti», first work in the vulgar tongue and receiving a lively welcome from the ordinary people whose faith found itself thus fortified.

Now the cinema is essentially the popular spectacle of our time. It is natural and logical that it should reproduce in its own special way, the themes which enchanted men during the centuries. The cinema, therefore, is in a position to present hagiography in a new medium capable of invigorating a subject, confessedly somewhat enfeebled,

and of presenting it in a new virile way to a vast audience. Considered from this point of view the cinema becomes the continuator of the grand forms of poetic expression, plastic and scenic; the «sacred film» not only justifies itself but demands a place. After the epic poems, the troubadours, paintings and frescoes, stained glass and sculpture, the decorations of Roman and Gothic churches, after the Mystery Plays in the Church square, here we have the art form of our times offering to those with noble inspiration something far greater in its power of persuasion and expression than any of the past prodigies. Abel G a n c e who is working on «THE DIVINE TRAGEDY» speaks justly of «Cathedrals of light». A film inspired by the Faith should achieve miracles.

One can hardly, therefore, exaggerate the gratification it arouses to see this sudden flight of hagiography to the screen. It has brought beauty to a domain so often the realm of the pernicious; productions are dictated by a concern for morality in place of the frivolous and the base. But if this kind of film is uplifting, it is also difficult, per-

haps even dangerous...

Let us go back to two films already mentioned: «MONSIEUR VINCENT» and «JOAN OF ARC». They are stories of exceptional souls, but they share in common the accomplishment of a precise action. It is this action which the scriptwriters have used on which to build their dramatic subject. In both cases we have dedication to a mission of evident grandeur, but one which, nevertheless, tends to focus attention on frail human nature, which has a definitely material end. Vincent de Paul and Joan of Arc are both certainly «instruments of God» but one has the task of «turning the English out of France» and the other has to wage a combat against destitution: on the one hand sentiments of patriotism and heroism and on the other that of pity. These are the points of contact, as far as these two films are concerned, which the authors have judiciously chosen in order to captivate their audiences.

Without prejudging «JOAN OF ARC» which, at the moment of writing we have not seen, one may say that «MONSIEUR VINCENT» finds its tremendous power in this «humane quality». It is by means of this quality that the Maurice Cloche film has forced its way to the front, that it has won the esteem of a large public which includes unbelievers. Its success is therefore doubly satisfactory since it has brought the profane under

the influence of a saint.

But here we find ourselves faced with a typical example of the principal danger which cinema hagiography courts. The whole of Vincent de Paul is not in «MONSIEUR VINCENT» and one fears that the man concerned with human misery has been too systematically placed before the spiritual man. We have mentioned the publicity given

to «L'APOTRE DU GIBET» which makes us think that the scriptwriter was first of all impressed by the picturesque quality of the life of Don Bosco. It is clear that if producers and writers care to seek in the «GOLDEN LEGEND» for subjects they will not lack them. The lives of the saints are assuredly often much more exciting than those of the lovers and gangsters who people our screens. But one must be careful not to mistake the means for the end, the route for the objective. Nor should the cinema let the saint be absorbed by the man who became the saint.

One must not lose sight of the fact that the cinema is a representational art. Herein lie its limitations. If the spiritual element is not to be misrepresented, the film hagiography finds itself faced with the impossibility of getting away from that «humane quality» which we have noticed in «MONSIEUR VINCENT». Even when dealing with divine manifestations, the drama is always played out as between one being and another, amidst those social and family contacts which link the soul of the saint with his fellows. Henry King's film «BERNADETTE» found undeniable dramatic interest in this fact, though it led him somewhat away from the essential point.

There are some things incapable of being represented, which, one might say, have no right to be represented. How shall one show a man at prayer, a saint in ecstasy without shocking, not only the unbeliever but also the faithful? Granted the naiveté which was so charming and perhaps even moving in «GREEN PASTURES» or «ROAD TO HEAVEN», it is not possible really to represent God as a character in a play.

The director in a film about a saint is, therefore, brought back, whether he wishes it or not to the human qualities of his character. Maurice Cloche has understood this well enough and one cannot but feel sad that he has left so little room for the spiritual side of his hero. In this way we are shown but one facet of his life and danger is lest that part be taken for the whole, particularly by the profane, as a result of this one-sided presentation. This would be to allow the most important aspect of the man, that precisely which makes him different from the rest of us, to remain merely a dead letter.

Another danger, greater still, derives from this. It consists, no longer in the fact that only the human side of the character is shown, but that only the picturesque part is seen, without taking into account the strife and opposition which plays so important a role in moulding the character of the personage.

When the production of «FRANCOIS D'ASSISE» was envisaged, under the direction of Genina, they spoke of the budget which would have to be raised. Now, after two or three years we have 200 million lire. Without even knowing

anything of the scenario we hazard a guess at what the first fault will be. Such a figure can only mean that the scriptwriter has made the most of the guilded youth of Francis, with banquets and horse-riding followed by stuttering renouncements of the pomp and vanities of this false nobility. Can such a sumptuous film express the message of a

Saint who dwelt only with poverty?

Here we come to one of the essential conditions for the spiritual success of the film hagiography. It is that within its limits, within the human limits it uses to express its subject, the spirit of the film should be conformable to the spirit of its hero. Maurice Cloche in this case seems to be a parvenu. And what of René Jolivet? Has he, in his evocation of the Curé d'Ars, allowed the true image of the priest to appear, that priest who passed half his life in the confessional?

It cannot be said that the film lacks scope. Like its predecessors this mode of expression tends to schematisation and simplification which have to be taken into account when assessing its output. Nor can it be claimed that it has diminished the efficiency of those other modes in their own field. Poetry, stained glass, sculpture have always pre-sented a simplistic image of sacred things. They have been supports to the Faith. In leading man towards the transcendental things, they have not betrayed the Faith but have rendered it more accessible to those incapable of attaining the rarified atmosphere of the great heights.

Film lives of saints, then, seem to us to be properly not so much an expression of the life of the Saint as an «introduction» to it. Since film is incapable of telling and showing everything, it should shun the ambition to go beyond what its medium can portray. With its feet on the ground, and making use of human terms, it can indicate the way by which its heroes conquered themselves in order to dwell in God.

Roberto Rossellini is planning a film about St. Francis of Assisi, but he does not intend to bring to the screen the whole of the story of the Saint. He will simply make use of «two hours in the life of the Poverello». This is a much more interesting idea than the ambitious intentions manifested by Genina. Art, and particularly representational art can be nothing more than an evocation, a ground for exaltation in regard to that spiritual surreality which in order that we may be possessed by it, needs to make use of other media such as meditation, study and prayer.

Pierre Leprohon

Jean-Pierre CHARTIER Critic of "Vie Intellectuelle",

Criticism, FORMALISM and Morality

Like the tongue in Aesop's Fables, the Cinema is capable of both good and evil. And, moreover, for the same reasons, because it is the instrument of language. Language is capable of everything; but men have never been condemned to remain dumb, on the pretext that they might misuse language, and contravene in words the rules of morality. The art of writing has never been prohibited on the ground that it produced bad books. But it has often happened that the Cinema has been condemned because bad films have been shown. There are still Catholics and members of the Clergy for whom the Cinema is an evil only to be tolerated, and whose dangers must at all costs be limited. But from quite another point of view, there are many among Academicians and Professors who share the contempt of which M. Duhamel was the champion in France and who would be ready to affirm as Paul Souday affirmed thirty years ago, «that the Cinema is only a magic lantern for three-year-old babies». Both the suspicion of Catholics and the contempt of the cultured have their origin in a very special form of criticism which judges FILMS without taking the CINEMA into account. Those who use this form of criticism denounce a tendency to «artistic formalism» in critics who believe in the Cinema.

It may seem curious that anyone should judge films without believing in the Cinema; without recognising that it has a language peculiar to itself, a means of original expression following varied tastes, and should give his opinion on the possible influence of the film, censure the intentions of the author, and reduce the subject to an intellectual scheme which he paraphrases, and the persons to characters whom he puts under a microscope to judge of their resemblance to real life. The influence of a film; the intentions of the author; a logical analysis of the subject, or a psychological analysis of the characters, these are points of view for judging a film which could be used equally well on the same story told in form of a novelette. If one neglects the special power which a cinematographic treatment gives to a subject, the psychological coherence which the language of pictures gives to the characters, it is easy to accuse the Cinema of over-simplification in the story, and of a want of power in the presentation of the characters. Criticism is easy, if by criticism is meant the disparagement of a work which one does not bother to comprehend. If by criticism one means the analysis and explanation of the cinematographic art then criticism is an art, and art is always difficult. It is this art which one claims to condemn under the pretext of «formalism».

Moral formalism and aesthetic Formalism.

Without doubt more is asked and expected from a Catholic critic than from any other. His readers expect him to give them, not only explanations of the artistic value of the film, but also criticisms which shall help them choose as Christians those films which they will go to see. However this does not mean that a Catholic critic should limit his study of a film to a judgement of its «moral value». The role of a Catholic critic must not be confused with that of the various bodies set up in nearly every country, according to the directions of the ENCYCLICAL «VIGILANTI CURA», and delegated by the Hierarchy to establish a moral standard for films. The proper role of this standard or evaluation must be well defined, in order to understand the part played by criticism.

The body which is charged with establishing a moral category of films has not the task of criticism. It speaks in the name of the Church, and its judgements bind the Church. It is certainly not desirable that the Church should lend her authority to artistic judgements. Thus, the bodies which have the mission of establishing these categories, make it quite clear that it is not part of their work to decide whether or not a film has been well carried out, or if its scenario is will constructed. They limit their work to indicating by a system of numbers, the films which children may be allowed to see: those which are only suitable for adults; those which raise the question of moral caution, and those which should be proscribed. The role of this evaluation is thus analagous to that of the Index in the literary sphere. Its function is to warn Christians of the moral dangers of certain films, pointing out these which might be injurious. But it has no mandate to point out a film as being well presented. A film of no intellectual or artistic value, or even a clumsy representation, or a foolish subject might receive a favourable number if there were nothing in it objectionable from a moral point of view. This is sufficient to show the necessity of Catholic criticism together with moral evaluation; and this criticism must choose from among the films which are not condemned, those which are really worth seeing.

If, when establishing moral categories, it is necessary to distinguish between the moral and the artistic value of a film for the reasons which we have shown, this distinction is entirely unjustified in the case of a criticism of a film. Criticism deals with thew hole work and judges it in its entirety. If criticism were to neglect the manner in which the work is treated and its artistic value, it would condemn itself to a «moral formalism» which would only take into account the most exterior aspect of the film, and would neglect its real meaning. Criticism would then limit itself to an automatic application of some code of decency. The exaggerations and the errors of such formalism have been so often denounced as to make it unnecessary to insist further upon them. The Legion of Decency as established in the United States claims no function to guide criticism. It has been drawn up as a sort of memorandum for producers, so that before beginning work on a film, they may know just what scenes, gestures and situations they must avoid if they do not wish their film condemned by religious organisations. But it is very evident that it is not by determining at what angle a «pin-up girl» may be photographed, or the maximum length of a kiss that the moral value of a film can be judged. It is possible to avoid all suggestive poses and all censurable situations, and yet produce a film entirely contrary to all Christian morality. The critic has to bring out the whole signification of a film, and he can only do this by an analysis and appreciation of its artistic expression.

It would be even more regrettable if the Catholic critic should take advantage of the distinction between artistic and moral value and limit his study to an aesthetic appreciation of the work, under pretext that moral judgment was not within his province. Even outside all religious considerations, it seems dangerous to transpose to the cinema the principles of art for art's sake. The search for pure poetry, the existence of an abstract painting are understandable in forms of art reserved for coteries. A cinematographic work cannot exist unless it brings together millions of spectators. By economic necessity the Cinema is a popular art, because it has to speak to the masses. This does not mean that it is impossible to produce works, which, while remaining accessible to all, offer to a smaller number the possibility of a more special interpretation, and a more subtle appreciation. But in only noticing this aspect of the works, or in confining himself to clever technique or subtleties of expression, the critic would indeed be neglecting that which makes the true value of the work, that is to say, once more, its signification. This limited attitude would be the true «artistic formalism» of whose insufficiency all are aware.

Abstract Criticism of the Subject.

But when we denounce artistic formalism it is usually because we wish to justify moral formalism or defend a criticism which reduces films to intellectual schemes of the subject. The first attitude relies on the artificial distinction between moral and artistic value, a distinction which, as we have seen, is in no way justified in the domain of criticism. The second is supported by a no less artificial distinction between form and substance. In it the suspicion of Catholics with regard to the Cinema, is apparent; it is less a question of understanding the cinema, than of limiting its dangers. In the second case it is the misunderstanding of the cinema by cultivated people; the possession by the cinema of a very special existence is not recognised, it is therefore considered useless to strive to comprehend its language; it is sufficient to apply to the film those methods of criticism suitable to a novel or the action of a play. In order to justify this attitude more easily, the film itself is reduced to simple ideas, its personnages to abstractions. In neglecting everything in a film that is really cinematographic, we admit that we simply do not understand it.

Many cultivated people would be astonished if told that their criticism of a film showed they had not understood it. There is, however, nothing surprising in that. Culture is the knowledge of the different means of expression of a civilisation combined with the talent of using some of them, What to day is called culture does not include the cinema, for the good reason that cinema has no place in the programmes of schools or universities. Culture is above all literary; it is the result of ten or fifteen years of enthusiasm in reading written texts. It forms the mind by the difficult games of philosophic or scientific abstraction, and by handling literary or mathematical

symbols. The cinema speaks an entirely different language, above all a concrete language. For symbols it substitutes the actual images of things, and for the abstractions of reasoning the concrete logic of acts. Nothing has prepared cultivated minds to understand this language and it is not astonishing to find that a public consisting of intelligent professors who hardly ever go to the cinema, should miss the subleties of a film, which on the other hand are quite evident to the habitués of the local cinemas.

To speak more precisely, a film narrative is essentially based

1. in all that concerns the pictures, on the mimetic interpretation and the gestures of the actors, and on the associations which come from the juxtaposition of the pictures,

2. in all that concerns the words, on oral language in which, contrary to written language, inflexion, tone and delivery have as great an importance as the sense of the words pronounced. The language of the cinema, therefore, appeals principally to the faculties of observation, it calls for a constant attention to the sensible side of things; the puckering of a brow, the contrast between two lightings, the tremor of a voice may be the key to a character or of a situation; nothing in book learning prepares the mind to seize these subtleties. On the contrary since La Bruyere, the abstraction of intellectuals, their want of attention to realities, has often been pointed out. Far from being a direct preparation to the understanding of films, the culture of to-day is often an obstacle. A go-between who is used to decipher the hidden intentions of his clients in their faces; a garage hand possessing the concrete logic demanded for the detailed examination of a motor in order to discover the cause of a break-down, are the better prepared, intelligence being equal, to understand the language of a film, than an intellectual accustomed to the abstract play of

It is of course possible for a man of letters to understand the cinema. But to do so he must renounce the methods and forms of thought expedient elsewhere. To reduce a film to its subject, and its personnages to abstractions, is precisely to follow the bent of a bookish mind, and be condemned to speak beside the mark. In denouncing artistic formalism in the cinematographic domain, one only attempts to justify that profound misunderstanding of those means of expression which are the real property of the film.

For a «complete» criticism.

In refusing to reduce criticism to a simple analysis of the subject, we must never lose sight of the substance, to interest ourselves only in the form of the film. We have seen, on the contrary, that by making only a formal study, the essential part of the film is neglected — that is, its signification. But the signification of a film must not be confused with the analysis of its subject; the same subject treated by ten different authors would take on ten different meanings according to the methods employed in treating them.

Here the Catholic critic has a very grave responsibility, it is according to his appreciation that his readers will form their opinions on even a film of which the simple moral evaluation can hardly explain it in its entirety. We have already said that these evaluations cannot show at the same time both the artistic and the moral value of films, because they plight the authority of the Church. The Catholic critic judges a film in his capacity of Christian, but his

judgement involves no one but himself. He is, therefore, free to give a judgement on the work as a whole, and he would betray his mission if he did not bring out its real signification.

In order that the critic may fully carry out his role, he must guard against the two vandalisms which we have already pointed out, and which both consist in forgetting the cinema, either by neglecting the artistic form of films and judging them by exterior criteria, or by the intellectual vandalism which reduces them to abstract elements. By leaving on one side artificial distinctions between artistic and moral value, or between form and substance, a complete criticism strives to bring out the signification of films by relying on the analysis of their means of expression. It is through the explanation and the appreciation of the form of a film that a judgement can be made of value.

Both «moral formalism» and «aesthetic formalism» find their place and their justification in this more complete conception of criticism. A critic must never forget that, whatever may be the signification of a whole film, the pictures themselves have a power of suggestion, a hold on the spectator incomparably stronger than those of the written word. We are speaking here of an elementary psychological phenomenon which does not belong to what is usually considered the moral domain, but whose moral consequences may be considerable, the ideomotive power of the pictures; the persistence in the imagination of the scenes, are all the stronger because they are caused by an unconscious activity of the mind. The danger presented by this point of view by the cinema is so much the greater as all films can be shown in all cinemas, and all all the world goes to see them. A theatrical critic does not need to remind his readers that the plays of Sartre or Anouilh are not meant for children. A critic of the cinema must be ceaselessly preoccupied to give such indications as may allow his readers to choose between films according to the age, the education or the understanding of the spectators.

If, in this measure, the most liberal minded critic must take his part in a «moral formalism», he should not neglect a certain «artistic formalism». In fact one must never forget that the cinema is a means of expression which has hardly passed the stage of lisping. It is a language which is forming itself. It is under our eyes that the authors of films learn to manipulate this language, and the public must learn to understand it. Each new progress of cinematographic language shocks and confuses the public; the critic alone may allow himself to rough-hew a kind of «school of spectators» since, until a new order arises, the ordinary school does not prepare the mind for the language of the film. A Catholic critic has less right than any other to neglect this aspect of his task, as, taken as a whole, the Catholic public has up to now kept apart from the cinema, which up to the present has provided few films acceptable to Catholics. By leading Catholics to interest themselves in the cinema itself, and thus turning them into «active spectators», understanding and loving the cinema, the critic can surely exert the most positive long term influence on the production of films. For films acceptable to Catholic will never be produced except in the measure in which Catholics go to the cinema and form an enlightened public knowing how to choose.

The Significance of the Film.

The importance accorded to the explanation of films, and to the study of means of expression must not allow it

to be forgotten that the aim is always to make the subject matter better understood, and to justify any judgements which may be given on it. On the other hand, the only valid judgements on the subject are those based on elements drawn from the work; even under the pretext of bringing out the signification of a film, it is dangerous to judge it by some parallel, or to try to interpret the intentions of the author. It is difficult to foresee the import of a work of art; that depends on the conditions in which its message is comprised and is received by the individual. To search too minutely into the author's meaning, is to risk going astray. In explaining a film by the ideas of its creators or by its original sources, there is risk of renewing in the cinematographic domain the errors of lansonian criticism applied to literature. The reasons for which a film has been written, and what influence it may have, can be the subject of interesting hypotheses, but are entirely outside the scope of this question. It is in the work itself that one must seek for the meaning of the work. Here the aim of the critic is to help the public to get an idea of the psychological atmosphere, of the explicit or implicit inferences of the film, and to draw out the vision of the world or the judgement on men of which it is the expression.

In this domain, appearances may be very deceitful. A «happy end» may be fitted to a film fundamentally sad while a film paved with good intentions may be harmful to the cause it wishes to serve. The value of a film and its signification depend above all on the weight of human truth which it presents. In this «order» of idea there exist certain conventions which can easily warp the judgement. An edifying film is rarely helpful; works written to a thesis lose in truth that which they seem to gain in meaning; examples which are not believed have never convinced anyone. On the other hand, an optimistic film is not necessarily moral; if it describes an artificial world the oversweetened picture of life which it presents may be more harmful than the most violent realism. The contrary prejudice is also dangerous; realism is not necessarily true because it is black; there exists, principally in France, a tradition of «black realism» whose interpretation of life is as false as that of those roseate films which are inspired by an artificial optimism.

Here we come to the very centre of the debate on the morality of films, this deals essentially with pessimism and optimism. It is curious that in the name of rationalism (which supposes that man is naturally good) a disheartened realism is defended, and that in the name of christian morality (which recognises the existence of evil in the very nature of man) people ask for rosy hued films which put on the scene only angelic personnages. We cannot understand this attitude in certain Catholics, if it is conceded that the cinema is only an amusement in which even children can take part. The problem of cinema for children has not yet been decided, the only way of solving it would doubtless be to write films for children, just as books are written

for them. However, this is no reason for insisting that Catholics should only go to see films which are on the level of a harmless story.

It seems that among the films passed for adults, a Christian conscience should specially appreciate those which illustrate the duality of man's nature. Pessimism is opposed to Christianity in the measure in which it depends on the belief in fate, the essential province of tragedy. But in the artistic domain, it is not a story for children which is opposed to tragedy, it is drama. Drama is the privileged form of expression of Christian thought about man because it is the illustration of the great theme of the fight between good and evil. It is really impossible to imagine a powerful and humane work which should describe a world in which evil had no place. How would it be possible to represent life faithfully and touch the depths that are in man without reminding him that a beast slumbers in him, and that his life is a continual battle?

Evil is part of the world and as such it forms part of the domain of cinematographic work. The precedent of great Catholic writers from Mauriac to Bernanos or Graham Greene makes the condemnation of films which do not look at all life through rosy glasses, really astonishing. But it must be understood that a film which gives a complaisant picture of evil, and which substitutes for the fight between good and evil a pessimistic resignation to what is absurd and ignoble, shows a vision of the world opposed to the Christian view. We could say the same about a film which showed a glorification of absolute will, of power or of human pride, and in general of all films founded on the inversion of Christian values. But the duty of a Christian critic is to take his place on this level and not to judge a film by its exterior. It is after having brought out the fundamental but often implicit point of view of the authors, and after having tried to give the film its true meaning, that, if necessary, he can show where it is opposed to Christian principles. It is not enough that a film should allude to the problem of evil or to sin, for it to be qualified as immoral.

To illustrate this combat and this excess one cannot systematically ignore the misery of man and the plight of the world. The characters in BRIEF ENCOUNTER argue in an atmosphere of sin and temptation, but fight for purity and fidelity. The value of the film lies entirely in the greatness of that fight. To prove that we are not tilting at windmills, it is enough to quote the opinion of a Catholic who thinks that a film is harmful because the situations are contrary to the natural moral code of the spectator, so that he looks for a sin of some sort or another. Even a film like «MONSIEUR VINCENT» has raised doubts in certain Catholic circles, because it does not pass over in silence the scandal of misery, or certain deviations in the behaviour of Christians. From this point of view the reading even of Holy Scripture should be discouraged, and there is no Saint's life which is «moral».

7. P. Chartier.



Michel FOURRÉ-CORMERAY

Director General of the French Nationa Cinematographical Centre

The sense of Responsibility

In the course of an audience which he was kind enough to grant me during a recent visit to Rome the Holy Father said: «The Cinema and those who work for it carry a very heavy load of artistic and moral responsibility.»

In France we are of the opinion that this twofold responsibility ought to be the concern of free individuals. State censorship should intervene only when public order is manifestly in danger of being upset and the rules of decency violently disturbed.

What is the result of such a policy? It is true some critics, because of the excesses of one film, condemn the entire French cinema output. In reply, let me affirm that the directors of my country are men who fully accept the double responsibility mentioned by His Holiness, and that freedom allows an astonishing diversity in national production.

Some are only anxious to provide people with a little innocent make-believe, others are preoccupied with the social message which they wish to give their audience. Yet others — Catholics and non-Catholics alike — wish by means of film to try to share their Faith with their brethren.

France has a great variety of spiritual families. There is Pascal and St. Thérèse of Lisieux. There is also Voltaire and Rousseau.

But in such a climate with so much freedom and competition each wishes to express his own peculiar philosophy with the greatest force and conviction and beauty. Their works become purer because each one regards it as a message.

Christians all the world over will find in French productions the works of «honest men» — often the works of Christians.

to omi Lamy

Marcel L'HERBIER

Founder and President of the Paris Institute of «Hautes Etudes Cinématographiques», and celebrated author of many films which have achieved world-wide success, has recently suggested a Nobel Prize for the Cinema. The interesting article which he has kindly contributed for the benefit of our readers explains his reasons for so doing.

A free Cinema

The iron hand wherein producers grip the cinema is, unfortunately, enclosed in a golden glove.

There is no need to look elsewhere for the inherent vice of this Art. From that fact ensue all its shortcomings and all that merits reproach in too many films among the thousands that this world-wide industry offers to satisfy the intermittent thirst of defenceless consumers.

Happily, these varied potations, sugary and insipid, narcotic or dangerously intoxicating — but always according to the recipes (or «receipts») of a ruthless commercialism, are unable to slake the thirst of everyone. There remain in the world many eager minds who avait a different brew — other films.

The question, then, is how, in these days of U. N. O., of U. N. E. S. C. O., of interchange

of ideas, of world-citizenship, of psycho-analysis of whole nations and of notable progress in cultural and social matters, world-economy is able still to tolerate the fact that an Art like that of the Cinema — perhaps the only true one of our epoch, because the only one shared by all — has the right to expend more than 80% of its productive power on concocting nostrums of no value or profit to any except those whose hands pour them out — this gold-gloved hand to which thus accrues yet more gold Such an anomaly demands a remedy.

In a limited space, it is possible only to point in which direction lies the best antidote, and indicate its components.

In order to gauge, by way of comparison, the subjection of the Cinema, let us imagine that a «corner» in chemical products could monopolise, throughout the world, the manufacture of painters' colours — so indispensable to artists.

Picture, too, that this cartel decides to supply its exclusive products only to artists chosen by its administrative Council, i. e. those artists who undertake to paint solely to dictation and in accordance with the aesthetic canons of this council.

It is easy to guess what would become of the art of Painting.

The Cinema is in a similar predicament.

The Dictator-Group is a cartel of chiefs of industry (or the State). The Films are commissions. The artistic standards of the Producer-Societies are at the mercy of such considerations as prudence in outlay and guaranteed turnover. These standards stress the various moral, social, or political goals towards which the Society urges all Society.

What would painters do in face of this hypothetical monopolisation of the creative instrument? And how do Cinéastes deal with the reality?

The former would promptly divide into two categories: submissive and refractory, i. e. yes-men and independants. Then, before long, the Independents cut off from indigo and ultramarine, seeing themselves in danger of having to throw their palettes over the house-tops, — these Independents, united by misfortune, would form federations. Moreover, they would assuredly set themselves to locate, here, there and everywhere, the raw materials necessary to manufacture, among themselves, as free workmen, their indispensable pigments.

Cinéastes, then, are invited to resort to this same remedy, especially as up to now they have achieved but little towards their emancipation. Little, indeed, but still something.

Already, a few private groups are in existence where spiritual values take priority over £. s. d. Already some cultural, even religious societies have

given to their enterprises a lofty moral direction. Hence the films of consolation, of hope and of miracle. Here and there function co-operative bands or workers — creators who share alike in the effort and the recompense — authors, technicians and actors for whom service in the Art of the Film is the Alpha and Omega of professional integrity. These steps towards purification, the slowing-up of what may be called the gold-rush, hesitant as yet, but daily becoming more confident, must constitute the remedy to be prescribed and used, if we are to acquire a Film Industry worthier of itself and of adult humanity.

But how foolish to ignore all the counter-acting factors which endanger recovery! To increase the percentage of films able to elevate the masses, to please whilst inspiring them, to create freely those free films, would be a fool's game, à certain failure, unless the refractory Independents in filmmaking organize on a global scale the demand for and supply of their works — such an exploitation as shall be, in its turn, freed from restriction of circulation throughout the world and freed from the stranglehold of distributive combines.

Truly an immense programme, of which it is not easy to envisage even the beginning of practical realisation.

U. N. E. S. C. O. and its parent, U. N. O. are setting themselves the task to-day, of clarifying and sorting out the modern problems — even touching films — engendered by international cultural relations.

Why then, do not cinéastes who would emerge from their present plight, break away from the rule of the cheque-book brotherhood and look for aid towards U. N. E. S. C. O.?

Moreover, since the organization so lucidly directed by M. Torresbodet has just inaugurated an International Theatrical Federation and an International Music Federation, why should he not create an International Federation of Film-Writers? There is nothing against and everything for such a thing.

No other than such an organization would be as capable of smoothing away the obstacles, nowadays considerable, which block the progress of the weak and ill-equipped groups of independent filmmakers.

A great Federation of Film authors, under the aegis of U. N. E. S. C. O. could alone animate and hold together a solid army of professionals of all countries and all tendencies — a combination of the living forces of the Cinema.

And it is within this body — the «Central World Cinema» («Centrale Cinématographique Mondiale») thus constituted and of which I have

elsewhere described the immense advantages *) within this guild of those spiritually responsible members of the world's cinematographic productions that may be discussed and resolved the important problems concerning the moral rights of authors, their heavy responsibility, the legimitate safeguards they have the right to expect, and above all, their tremendous part in the education of millions and the peace of the world.

In consequence, and as a secondary result, the other material problems — those of frontiers, film-distribution, censorship, extermination of «trusts» and freedom of exploitation — would be more easily and speedily settled.

The union of all the Cinéastes of the world, resolutely facing the same objectives, spiritually

potent and resolved to create a Film-literature worthy of itself and of mankind, would be able to do what is impossible to the small-shopkeeper rivalries of the «get-rich-quicks» with their narrow aims and paltry complacency.

Thus may be born a free Cinema to circulate freely among free men. Then will a gigantic step be taken, not only towards adding loveliness to recreation, but also towards getting rid of the old antagonisms separating people from people — these citizens of the universe who are, at heart, so eager for peace!

Mrn.

Jean Georges AURIOL Scenario writer, Director of "La Revue du Cinéma", Paris.

«....ET CIRCENSES»

IS THE FILM ANYTHING BUT AN INDUSTRIAL PRODUCT?

«I am writing a novel», says the writer, «I am putting together a play», announces the dramatist. One can watch the artist painting his picture, and thumb the score on which the musician notes down what he hears, in order that it may be heard later as he has composed it.

«I am working on a film», must be the sigh, midway between resignation and childish secrecy, of the scenario writer, who resembles less the other artists than he does a busy architect, commissioned to-day to turn a barn into a garage, to-morrow to add a storey to a house, next to make use of some oddly shaped plot of ground so that some family's housing problem may be solved.

«Haven't you a good idea for a film?» producers sometimes ask him, rather with a malicious smile, since they are very doubtfoul that he has indeed a good one, or rather that he will be able to convey it to them, since what he has formulated is a whole film, scene by scene, in its perfect form, and not just an «idea». For the sort of idea they mean is rather like this: «I've got it. Let's make «LES TRAVAIL-LEURS DE LA MER» but in modern dress, with the labourers who are working on the reconstruction of the port at Le Havre.» Or else: «Look, get Viviane Romance, and get her to double the «DEUX

ORPHELINES» tortured in a concentration camp», or still further: «Here's a terrific title, Murder at the Mike!!! Make it with Fernandel; a straight thriller, but funny, with a set of musical numbers!!!» Now there is an idea! Never mind if it is impossible to imagine, and if you have, later, to take on two, four, six or twelve assistant script-writers to try and build a story as a result of this foolishness. In the film industry you only think in bursts, and it is enough that a so-called idea can produce sufficient of a burst, through the interpretation placed upon it by promoters and publicity agents, to give birth to a production no matter how costly it may be.

Fundamentally, the first stage of any film, is a poster, a poster with blood, sub-machine guns or rearing horses, women, decoratively up-ended in a mud-puddle, a spicy but sentimental title — something like «Condemned to Happiness» — and finally, if possible, a red-hot slogan, for instance, «The Perfect Couple Escape from a Paradise of Crime».

No-one blames the producers for selling their wares, or attempting to ensure their success; it is a fact that only very rarely is a film made following a scenario, conceived and imagined for production, for the very good reason that, before being shot, a scenario is an untranslatable work.

^{*) «}Opera» 26 November 1947.

Inevitably, the scenario is written in a language which the producer cannot or will not understand, assuming that he has come to regard the cinema not as an act or a means of expression but as a trade, exactly on a par with that of the restaurateur, the confectioner, or the pastry-cook. Still, for good cooking, it is not enough to have good pots and good recipes, you must also have certain experience and, above all, natural gifts.

Even in the form of a story, a scenario is written to be read in a different fashion from the novel; that is to say it must try to suggest all that cannot be expressed in words, and an actual film cannot be described, since the same subject, with the same characters and the same situations (one has seen it frequently in Hollywood) is on one occasion the source of a perfect success, on another, of failure; now the occasion of a charming film, now of one of poor quality.

It is now more than six centuries since the Franciscans chose in Giotto the wise «stage manager», who recalled incidents of sacred history in picture of such plain import that any child could make out the story, perhaps without understanding the symbolism to any extent, but, above all, without written explanation or commentary.

And nowadays, we can take note of the reputable producer whose idea it was to have films made on sub-standard, at least in part, before producing them on standard size film. He, at least, recognises his own inability to envisage a film before having seen it.

Finally, let us admire the superb frankness of the producer who said, «What exactly will my film be? Well, let me get it done and you'll see.»

Sometimes a masterpiece emerges by chance, often unrealised by the producers or even in spite of them, by the sheer force of an actor as clever as he is powerful. If it is a violent, astonishing film, he imposes his personality on it. The critics and the public in their turn were swept up by the whirlwind effect of «CITIZEN KANE» because the challenging presence of the author-director made itself felt every moment on the screen, the more startling with each re-appearance.

A different reception was given to «THE MAG-NIFICENT AMBERSONS», a film superior to «CITIZEN KANE» from more than one point of view, simply because the actor was lacking. This film whose quality was too good for its audiences will perhaps be appreciated in five years' time, exactly as Renoir's «LA REGLE DU JEU» had to wait for success until 1945, after it had failed completely to interest the audiences of 1939. Meanwhile, the producer could have gone bankrupt, and the author, had he been less celebrated could have stood the chance of starving.

It must be admitted that in «CITIZEN KANE» there was a deal of blood and thunder and some

spicy bits, and that in it Orson Welles was making a deliberate appeal to the emotions; whereas «THE AMBERSONS», like Robert Bresson's «LES DAMES DU BOIS DU BOULOGNE», is aimed rather at the brain than at the bowels. This is criminal in the cinema, where the «sin» of intellectualism is so grave that they go so far as to refuse to allow the eye to dwell on — indeed, even to take into account — people and things. Both eye and lens must confine themselves to recording flat reality, at least if one submits to the dictates of many leaders of film thought.

This conspiracy of many «realists» seems to me nowadays extremely revealing, whether these enthusiasts are ore are not conscious of the lowering of the standards of the artist who is content to imitate created things instead of imitating, as much in piety as in pride, the gesture of the Creator.

This realism, this imitation of the most obvious appearances which are in the final count the most deceptive frequently confines itself to the slavish description only of that which is ugly, flat, painful and horrible directly or indirectly, for the man of to-day, in many cases, through an instinctive wish to destroy the civilisation which he has ceased to love and no longer wishes to sustain, cannot content himself except beneath the burden of anything which will add to his disgust. On different pretexts everything which is not touched with decay is considered abnormal... like the morality of monkeys who having found an orchard in summer would at the end of the autumn tear out the trees which should flower again in spring.

In order not to despair of his profession the film author must console himself by thinking that perhaps one day he will manage to show on the screen what he has never yet been able to see on it; that one day he will have the chance and the freedom to give sensible form to that which he considers worth making known to his fellows which is now no more than a dream in his imagination. But even then, he begins to doubt whether the thing which is setting his own brain on fire will even interest others than himself. Has he not been taught the unchanging recipe for success, the increasingly stupid rules of artistic demagogy? Has be not almost always had to work on films which he would rather not have made, or even have gone to see?

One of the greatest evils of the cinema is that filmmakers only too often have to produce works which are distasteful to them. Much happier is the manual worker, the master-craftsman who can keep his faith in his trade by devoting himself to the strictly material perfection of his task of photography or the recording of pictures or sound. He is conscious of being in harmony with the universal order in the humble station where he can find the means to set his intelligence towards some real achievement and so does not lose his peace of soul.

But think of the actor who suddenly in a mirror catches sight of himself making a gesture so false that he would ridicule it in a student and hears himself speaking such absurd lines that he can only say them in a strange and affected voice. Imagine also the director who catches the pain or sarcastic expression on the face of his young assistant not yet disillusioned and can only say to him, «I know it's a rotten scene, but I've signed a contract and I am carrying it out... I've got to eat..»

And then there is the script writer who sees the scenario, which now he is ashamed of having written, though he too must live, turning into something shapeless while he resolves in some dark corner of his mind, already wearied with the occupation, the films which he could pour out if he were a free man.

If the craftsmen of the cinema are mercenaries, its artists are slaves.

As things are, conviction and feeling are the rarest of virtues in film-makers; they are too often little speculators, only greedy for importance and easy glory, highly trained workmen who are not artists, rule-of-thumb engineers with no particular gifts, self-styled poets lacking imagination, business men who are either cowardly or dull.

The cinema is run for the most part by men who swarm into it as if to a gold-rush. A minority who love their art soon give up any hopes other than of obtaining in the cinema high salaries and more varied amusements than in other walks of life.

Everyone abets in this huge confidence trick, which includes the mass-production of a form of morality for the masses, potted pageantry, doses devised now to stimulate now to lull the public according as circumstances demand that it should sleep, or on the other hand, should brace itself for revolt and combat. The public is not consulted and it gets the films it deserves.

Sometimes this monster finds what is served up to it unpalatable. So it changes its restaurant and crosses the road to go somewhere else where the menu appears more appetising; that is to say where the posters offer the maximum of blood-stains, of violence, of acts of vengeance, of pistols as phallic symbols and not less symbolic horse-back riding, the whole in filth and luxury at once so that both are mingled in an inextricable confusion. But the condiments are always the same — saccharine and spice.

Among scenario writers and other parasites (friends of the producer, the directors, sisters-in-law, nephew, typists, chauffeurs and so) in the making of a scenario and the dialogue for a film the phrase that crops up most frequently in their ridiculous discussions is the following: «Of course, I don't pretend to be an author but it seems to me...»

It seems a good many things to a good many people, but actually no-one pretends to be an author in the making of a film. It is a question of who can the most cleverly hide behind the skirts of another after having made sure that one's idea cannot be developed. No one wishes to be responsible for the criminal undertaking — criminal against the intelligence, criminal against beauty, contrary to the written rhythm of creation and to everything that is not vile or ridiculous in the nature of created beings. This lack of author and of any kind of self-esteem explains the unfortunate state of the cinema which is too powerful a medium to be left in the hands of isolated artists.

When anyone stands out, whose head rises out of the dusty sea of the flock, he is soon stifled or even stoned. Hatred of genius, or more simply, negation of personality, is in our era of accelerated decadence the saddest outward sign of an anonymous tyranny.

Perhaps a man should give up the Promethean pride of wishing to perpetuate his work according to his own whim. We should none-the-less continue to try to bring to perfection this wonderful means of communicating ideas, which is the cinema, believing that it will serve some-day to those who have the inspiration to open as if by magic the eyes of the whole Universe to the Truth.

Jean Georges Auriol

Maurice CLOCHE

Director of the films: «Monsieur Vincent and Dr Laënnec», emphasizes an important point:

INDEPENDENCE

Recently I received a letter in which I noticed the words: «... Christian director». This association of myself with these words pulled me up sharply. I had never given much thought to what in fact demands precise wording. Then I realised that if I thought

in this way it was because, being a Christian, it had never occurred to me that a director might be anything else. I had vaguely realised that it is not enough to have achieved the seal of Baptism and to subscribe to the Christian manner of thought in order to make films showing the Christian spirit and that one was only truly a Christian author or artist when one began actually to apply to one's work the precepts of Christ.

That is why we sometimes see non-Christian or agnostic writers who produce work impregnated with a spirit far more Christian than those by self-styled Christians.

On the other hand, to attach the name Christian to a film director causes me some uneasiness. Does it not restrict him unduly? Enclose him within too strict a boundary? To announce myself as a Christian in a world of cinema which is, if not hostile, at least indifferent, is it not (apart from human respect which is difficult to overcome) to accept the control, the censure, the direction, not of the Church, but of persons of good intention certainly, but whose conception of the Christian cinema has, up to the present, only borne fruit in a censoriousness not always very opportune; too often negative, of a patronising nature, of the kind labelled «rue St. Sulpice»?

In the ages of faith - to be a Christian artist was to possess a vigour, an imagination, an audacity even, which to-day would shock the descendents of men to whom Christianity meant the whole of life with its sins and its sacraments, impregnated with the idea of God, of Christ, which gave to man an image alive and complete. In the same way that the Evangelists were not afraid of the implications of the words they used - the artists who built the great Cathedrals, did not hesitate to represent man in all his weaknesses, his faults, the vices of the flesh, but they also showed forth the march of the interior life of the soul, the wonder of the spiritual life. That has ended. We live in an age of decadent, devitalised, emasculated art, which has destroyed the grandeur, the harmony which might typify the churches of today. We no longer have artistic creations but commercialised productions which give to Christ and His religion an appearance that is insincere, second-rate, mediocre, ugly - the image of the passive faith, the lifeless Christianity of our times.

That is why I fear that the cinema called Christian may bring us productions full of «repository art» — of self-conscious confessional propaganda.

The cinema is already sufficiently enslaved by the financial magnates who have brought it to the impasse in which it finds itself all over the world for anyone to want to add to its bondage.

It is no longer necessary that it should submit to the direction of a propaganda that is the enemy of all true art; for the Catholic Church, above all other organisms, government, parties, financial powers, trusts, gives to her children the greatest liberty of expression and creation — since she is the representative on earth of Christ and Christ is of all men the most profoundly human. But this liberty of expression and creation must not be deformed; without true liberty great art, above all, Christian art is not possible.

I appreciate that I have the privilege of being a Christian director — only on condition that I may express myself as freely, as strongly, as violently as my position as a Christian demands it.

I do not seek then an excuse for licence against morality or behaviour, but I do claim that for the Christian artist and especially the Christian cineaste, the second-rate film with its rosy stories of holy water, and piety belong to a past which it serves no purpose now to judge — for it is the future that we must look well in the face — fighting and striving for it — and not as passive censors and puritans.

No-one will expect from me «religious» films following the accepted formulas and ideas. For me, faith and life are intimately connected. What concerns me passionately is man with all his greatness and also all his weakness. Man is capable of becoming a saint but he can also be a sinner lost in the midst of his weakness, of his vices. All that I am trying to do is to express myself according to the law of Christ.

The task I have begun with «MONSIEUR VIN-CENT» and «Dr. LAENNEC». I propose to continue with «ONDESSONK» («L'oiseau de proie» — «Bird of Prey») the adventurous life of Isaac Joques (martyred by redskins in the New France at the beginning of the XVIII Century), then a forthcoming film LA CAGE AUX FILLES» will pose the problem of the young delinquent girl and of the heavy responsibility which society and the family has. This film will not be «rose water» and will not shrink from the cruel truth — it is for this reason that I demand for the Christian director liberty of expression and independence. Liberty of expression is not the same thing as licence of expression. One can say everything on the screen without forgetting that one is addressing millions and millions of spectators. Everything depends on the form and the language one employs.

One can be trenchant and truthful without being wanting in tact and wounding modesty. We managed to show in «MONSIEUR VINCENT» the temptation of the saint by a young girl without shocking anyone. The responsibilities of writers and directors of film are very considerable and very few have measured them.

To achieve this independence I have become my own producer — but to be a producer involves finding means of financing films.

Do Catholics and Christians in general realise that now the time has come to help those who are trying to fight for our common ideal in the world, that the period of passive encouragement has now come to an end, that it is now necessary to assist materially and financially those Christian directors who have come to realise that they have a duty to fight with the cinema on behalf of man?

M. v. ch



ST. JOHN-BAPTIST VIANNEY, CURÉ D'ARS as interpreted by Georges Rollin

«LE SORCIER DU CIEL» (THE HEAVENLY WONDER WORKER)



Epilogue: Gangs of workmen hoist the Cross on the Basilica de la Paix

Two rough sketches by Franz MASEREEL

for LA DIVINE TRAGÉDIE by ABEL GANCE



«Let the little children comunto Me»

(Lk. xviii 16)

« Thank you for having understood me . . . »

I regret very much that the pressure of work each day at the studio and each night at the theatre has prevented me finding the time to write for the «International Film Review» the article you so kindly requested of me.

I wish, howewer, to seize the opportunity of saying, on the hand, what a profound pleasure it was to make, through the film «MONSIEUR VINCENT», contact with so radiant and human a saint; and on the other, what emotion I experienced to learn of the welcome given by the various publics to Maurice Cloche's beautiful film.

For the first time since I came to the cinema — and my first film was a very long time ago — I had the feeling that this film had woven between its unknown spectators and myself the bonds of a reciprocal

I thank the «International Film Review» for having offered me its vast circulation in order to reply en bloc to the precious messages of sympathy which have been addressed to me from foreign lands and of which I restore to the saintly figure of Vincent de Paul the large part which belongs to him.

A GREAT UNDERFAKING:

LA DIVINE TRAGÉD

One of the greatest film productions, perhaps the greatest of all, in modern times has been begun. The celebrated producer Abel Gance, whose name is universally known, has been working at its elaboration for some years. The film in question is «LA DIVINE TRAGEDIE» (The Divine Tragedy) which is no other than the

Passion of Our Lord seen for the first time in a modern setting.

The synopsis of this work, which we have examined, appears to be a vivid and objective application of Père D on c o e u r's profound words: «We do not know whether it is the Gospel that appears through the medium of our own times or whether it is through the sacred writings that we see the things and people of today. What does it matter, seeing that eternity and time coexist one with the other, the one in the other, and that it must above all not be thought that the Gospel does not belong strictly to the here and now».

At our request, Abel G an ce has sent us the following:

VEXILLA REGIS!

«Things no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no human heart conceived, the welcome God has prepared for those who love Him.»

«LA DIVINE TRAGEDIE», which purposes to be, by the Grace of God, at once the most humble and most heart-searching page of the Bible in film of the future, will be made, after the manner of the cathedrals, without name of author or director or star. It will be anonymous. It will be the precious fruit of a group of artists, moved by piety and enthusiasm, made so that the people of the whole world may steep themselves afresh in the spring of its words and the light of

It is through Christ, through His Passion, that the Word is portrayed. That is the first and greatest of the tasks to be accomplished. «Nothing equals the last act of Christ's Passion», says Oscar Wilde in «De Profundis». Film at its truest, still in limbo, must be born of the Passion, just as the tragic stage was born of the mystery plays enacted in the churchyards. The first printed book was the *Bible*. Let us, in our turn, lay «LA DI-VINE TRACEDIE» is the conduction of the sineman. VINE TRAGEDIE» in the cradle of the cinema.

«For fifteen centuries now», writes Daniel-Rops, «Christian men, looking to supplement the lack of texts and documents, have asked of talent, of genius, to bring back to them God made

«Today, when we seek to portray Jesus for ourselves, it is through the medium of the great works of art that our imagination is enkindled. It is for Art to depict the image of Christ.» And Père Doncoeur justly dares to write these searching words:

«In the finest sense of the word, the Christ of Art can be only the Christ of Faith. This is the Christ most real to us, wherein the veils that hide Him are rendered diaphanous to let a ray of inward light shine through.» This is surely to return that blazing Faith of Fra Angelico which has been a beacon light to me during the composition of my own work. Art demands love. To picture Christ one must live with Christ.

«Our epoch is one of such abjection and it has resigned itself in so cowardly a manner to the surrender of its own will; our life is so deplorable, a life without ardour, without generosity, without love, without ideals, that it might not be impossible we should listen to an apostle determined to be heard.» Thus prophesies a little known writer, Georges Darien, who died in poverty half a century ago.

To this dramatic outburst I would add: «Who better than Christ could make Himself heard in our own still more contaminated times? What voice could be more powerful than His to still the clamour of bewilderment and despair that now seems to have reached the point of paroxysm?»

And if, perchance, we are accused of showing humanity on the path to darkness before it has actually reached that pass, it is because we believe that the primary mission of our art is to point out the mortal dangers that we verge on and to set up fences to save us from the abysses before it is too late.

Dante's Inferno pales before that which modern man is preparing for himself. And it is from the depth of this pit of flames that the Passion, the one only symbolic promise of possible deliverence will arise, light coming out of the fire, music emerging from the great lament of mankind, to begin again, nineteen centuries later, its cycle of redemption.

It is our mission, the mission of transfiguration that pertains to our Art, to brandish, at the tragic crossroads of world history in 1949, in the midst of the present tempest, the great Winding-sheet of Christ like an oriflamme, as a rallying standard, a sacred standard on which must be inscribed in symbols of fire His Passion and His Holocaust.

And whilst His Passion unfolds before our eyes, we all of us, so far as we can, must climb with Him our own personal Calvary if we will abate the evils of our time in the mirror of His sufferings.

This film has no other aim but to help the unhappy ones of earth to take, with eyes uplifted, the first steps along the way that leads up towards heaven.

A great-hearted man, Georges de la Grandière, promoter of that admirable «ST. VIN-CENT DE PAUL» immortalized again by Fresnay, has been engrossed for some months in the preparation of «LA DIVINE TRAGEDIE».

Pushing in front of him, like Sisyphus, the great rock represented by the material side of the production, he has succeeded in crystallising, in polarising, energies dispersed in the four corners of the world. He must, nevertheless, be able to continue his efforts. He must be helped and supported, and in every country men of goodwill must continue to bring him the necessary stones for the

building of our cathedral. In this way it will be possible to effect for the first time throughout the world, under the Sign of the Cross of Christ, a link between all those Christians who realise, in accordance with Pope Pius XI's own words, that the cinema is the most efficacious way of influencing the masses.

I know well, to use Kierkegaard's words, that «the supreme tragedy lies undoubtedly in being misunderstood as he is by the people, by the Pharisees, by His disciples, in a word by all men, notwithstanding the most sublime ideas that He desires to impart to them.»

The Jews had at least some reason for not believing in Christ, for they did not know what was going to come about; but we who do know have no longer any excuse.

In weaving the tragedy of our own time into the Divine Tragedy of Christ, in suppressing the notions of time and space in a sort of fourth dimension which the cinema alone allows us to contemplate, we are further convinced that by means of the cinema we are serving the cause of peace and of the closer understanding between nations, a cause so ardently championed by the great Belgian Minister, van Zeeland. Let us not forget the words he addressed to the O.C.I.C. Congress: «Catholics have thus, in regard to the rest of the world, a very special responsibility. The means are now available to bring about the triumph of this doctrine, the materials are at hand. It is for you film experts», he says, «to build the edifice. If you do not, tomorrow comes war . . .» I am trying to build that edifice. And now when God has cast the works of the divine clock in a heap upon my table and I am trying patiently to put it together again — «Als ik kan!» — «As best I may'.» van Eyck used to say — I will not stop my craftsman's work until I hear in my heart its chime sounding the deliverance of mankind.

I beg the Light Divine to regard me as its most earnest workman diffusing it by spark and rocket and blaze and heat across the screens of the world, like an unknown architect of this new cathedral of living and speaking light, gathering about me a galaxy of artists and technicians won over by my own Faith and by the splendour of the work to be accomplished.

And may Christ allow us to offer Him humbly our homage «in weakness and in fear and in much trembling» wherein St. Paul's own power lay.

. . . Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name . . .

Dul/any

With reference to the film

LAENNEC

Laënnec!

When the project of a film of which he was to be the hero was first mooted, this name meant very little to me: a hospital, auscultation, a face recalling a well-known brand of tooth paste: all somewhat vague and unpleasant.

Like many another in France, and, indeed, throughout the world, I was ignorant of the fact that Laënnec was one of the founders of modern medecine; that his work made him the equal of Hypocritus and Pasteur and that the extent of his discoveries, the infallibility of his methods, his prodigious medical genius had long earned him a special place among the benefactors of humanity.

In view of the fact that each stage of his thoroughly documented and profound studies (Professor Monder has devoted a long article to this subject in his grand work «Grands Médecins presque tous» and throws a new light upon it) was a step nearer the immense and magisterial standard work on this subject, it seems to me incomprehensible that, even now, the name of Laënnec remains little known.

Incomprehensible. For even during his life he was a much sought after doctor. Among his clients were to be found the greatest names in France, from Chateaubriand to the Duchesse de Berry. Doubtless, there was something of what we should call snobbery about it, nevertheless, he was a fashionable doctor. It all helped. Especially in view of the peevish anger with which he had to contend (the lot of all innovators) when he demonstrated to his peers that error is error. Perhaps he rode a little roughly over their pet routines and was too calm when putting his proofs before them.

Even so, it is hard to understand the violence of the attacks of which Laënnec was the object; or why it should have been able to perpetuate its malign influence: for it is not so long since the stupid and stubborn dislike for Laënnec, once fashionable among physicians, was finally vanquished.

Perhaps it is the case that such a life must suffer the late maturing of its glory — that such glory is in direct proportion to the intensity of the hate and wickedness and envy which it has aroused. If this

is so, let us hope that it has reached its zenith.

It does not really matter. For when the time came for the film to be made, it was a singularly exalting experience for those connected with it to realise that they were to share in an enterprise which was to have the character both of a revelation and a reparation. The completed film presents the public with a testimony capable of achieving this object. It takes trouble to describe the state of ignorance in which medical science found itself before the invention of the stethoscope; it shows how auscultation, taken for granted to-day only reached that position as a result of the meticulous and persevering cataloguing of the sounds which are characteristic of the various kinds of pulmonary disease, and it shows how the advent of Laënnec's invention put a check to the fatal results of consumption by helping to track down pleurisy, which, until then had been thought to be the last stage of pulmonary tuberculosis.

The film shows the works of a man who placed the interests of his fellow men before his own. He kindled the spark which was a prelude to the blaze of unbelievable benefit Humanity has since received

The film offers to our tormented world the pacific example of one of the purest geniuses of France.

These are a few of the reasons why it is to be hoped that an abundant success and a wide distribution will combine to reveal, by means of this film, a glorious story too long unappreciated.

Pine Muchan

When I was the Curé d'Ars

«It is necessary to go to Ars if you want to furnish yourself with ideas about, and to be impregnated with the feel of the place, and to see the relics of the Saint». This was the counsel given to me many times a day. Some time before the film was due to begin, I left Paris, and, some 200 miles away, in my native town, withdrew into the solitude of a Retreat House under the direction of the Society of Jesus. Why bother about finding stones, rooms, places, if I did not first find myself? When one is in need of spiritual consolation it is first of all necessary to discover the spirit. We are all possessed of this illuminating entity called a soul, but just as the sun may sometimes be shining away beyond the fleecy clouds, so the soul may also be hidden, surrounded by banks of gloom and mist; the soul has its wintry season and great curtains of darkness rise up from the depths to bewitch it.

To make a film of adventure is easy enough, the main requisite is a good figure and physique: a love story needs chiefly tenderness of heart: to make people laugh is largely a matter of technique: if you lack one or other of these things, intelligence can supply them. But it is not possible to bring John Baptist Vianney to the screen without the assistance of his particular spirit. The supernatural fire which consumed the soul of Vianney, illuminated hundreds of thousands of souls during the 45 years of his unforgettable pastorate. Imagine trying to show a film without a projector, or rather, without the current needed to set the film projector working. All that was not spiritual in Vianney was but his «poor corpse» as he termed his body; his heart, his intelligence, was the only connection his body seemed to have with the earth.

He used to say, «There is nothing more marvellous than man, and nothing so small... nothing smaller when one thinks of the body; nothing greater when one thinks of the soul. Some people spend all their time looking after their bodies, as if that was all there was to do. One should, on the contrary, hold them in disdain.»

John Baptist Vianney was little more than a spirit. How is one to begin to make a film about such a being? How undertake the unequal combat of trying to compass a soul with the material camera? You can hardly clarify the soul — it is the soul which casts light. What can kilowatts do about it?

I have not yet seen the finished film, but if, for a moment, the veil which covers the infinite marvels of this saintly soul has been drawn aside, a veil beyond which the camera, still so very youthful, can scarcely hope to penetrate, the credit is largely due to Charles BAUER, the cameraman, that outstanding master of lighting.

The tools which the actor customarily has at his disposal with which to master the camera are memory, observation, thought and precision, but how set about to capture the flexibility, the tears, the ecstasy demanded by this role? How keep such a state of mind and also remember to fall on one's knees at a particular moment during a tracking shot: that is to say, to keep in mind the ecstasy and also keep an eye on the carriage so as to fall in adoration at the moment it passes the appointed line? To walk, the eyes on God, so to say, but the feet becoming tangled in the lines of the tracking shot! To know that a movement, exaggerated by no more than a couple of centimetres, will destroy clarity of the image and interfere with other technical points! To try to keep these dry and arid terms in mind when the memory is running dry: — the purest faith, they say, is silent -- nevertheless, there the dialogue is, and it has to be uttered. Another difficulty is dealing with the michrophones, so sensitive - one's voice is too low or too high: one's stammering gradually improves and God, at least will have understood what we were trying to do! Dear, gentle, conscientious Carrouet, our sound engineer: how much worry I have caused you!

Solitude; silence; abandonment of one's own thoughts: they are indispensable to the right performance of such a personage. To defend himself against the noise, bustle, and movement of life which lasted 18 hours daily, the holy Cure withdrew himself to the only solitude possible for him: the serenity of his confessional: and there he was able to pour out his soul. The business of being the Curé d'Ars became for him a martyrdom.

So the making of «LE SORCIER DU CIEL» became for me a veritable Calvary; trying as I did, vainly, to approximate to the frontiers of that glorious life which John Vianney expressed and which I felt was necessary for our film. It is likely that the Faith itself will soon begin to spread. «There will come a time», said the Curé, «when men will begin to be weary of the ways of men; when one will be no longer able to talk to them of the ways of God without bringing tears to their eyes.» When it is a question of the more facile

human sentiments, goodness, charity, love of one's neighbour, religion, humility, etc., it is easy, even though it may not be very amusing: it is easier still to deal with sentiments that are more violent: blows from a blunt instrument, a lingering kiss, a crime, a robbery, a fire aboard a steamer — all in glorious technicolour!

The playing of the Curé, however, was another thing, and it is only due to the complete understanding and sympathy shown by our extremely

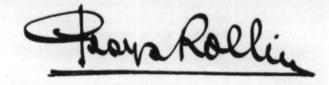
intelligent director, Marcel Blisthène.

The Cinema has not yet outgrown its «physical» era; it is tied now to the image, to form, colour, relief: the time will come when it is able to express itself in terms of the spiritual, of thought, of intelligence. Much later on it may discover the soul: patient but immortal and ever present.

Actors are not engaged because they bear a physical resemblance to the parts they play, nor because they possess the right attitude of soul. Producers, authors, directors, do not do things like that. A long period of evolution is necessary before they think of things in this way.

However, thanks to this habit of empiricism, it happens to be the case that I was asked to do «LE SORCIER DU CIEL». Quite simply it was because I happen to have a similarity of features to John Baptist Vianney. I look like the sainted Curé D'Ars. I shall always be grateful to the producers. They were courageous and battled strongly to get me the part when the role was being considered. Apart from physical resemblance, I was, from the commercial point of view, not well enough established to justify the risk involved, that is, of the 40 or 50 millions of francs involved.

Nevertheless, owing to their tenacity, I have experienced some of the most beautiful moments of my career as a film actor. Further: it was a great act of Faith.



Jean MORIENVAL
Film Critic on «L'Aube»,
former Director of «Choisir», Paris

FRENCH PIONEERS

OF A CATHOLIC CINEMA

Catholic Cinema? The phrase implies a large claim. We do not really know whether such a thing exists. Our aim here is to recall early French efforts in the realm of the cinema which were Catholic in aim and thought, or had as their object the illustration or teaching of Catholicism. Already a great deal.

Let us go back to the beginning to see how the Cinema gained its place in French life. For a long time it obtained no footing, but was but one of a hundred diversions available to Parisians, one more side-show at the fair. Light amusement, not food for thought. M. Dussaud, colleague of Charles Pathé, might have the temerity to declare: «The Cinema will be to-morrow's school, newspaper and theatre». He was not believed by Catholics any more than by anyone else.

For education and recreation one turned to song, theatre and lecture-hall. Lectures were often illustrated by projected pictures, thanks to the old magic lantern, now greatly improved. The Salle du Progrès, the first hall where public projection for educational purposes took place, was opened in 1872 by that astonishing priest and scholar, the Abbé Moigno, who founded the scientific journals Le Cosmos and Les Mondes and who might well become a legen-

dary figure. Meanwhile, lay propaganda had achieved much in the field of projection, and the clergy signified their recognition at the *Bonne Presse* congress of 1895.

Straightaway, Père Vincent de Paul B a i 11 y, famous apostle of press and book, and also of pictures, decided to set up a projection service. Its direction was entrusted to G. Michel Coissac, member of the Bonne Presse since 1892 and future author of l'Histoire du Cinématographe. Methodical, precise and receptive to ideas, Coissac was quick to master and develop technical details. Under his leadership the Bonne Presse projection service acquired considerable importance. He created in France a kind of ministry of propaganda which governed for thirty years and achieved a large measure of success in almost every diocese. Sufficient proof of its usefulness can be found in the columns of Le Fascinateur, monthly review founded by the Bonne Presse in 1903, of which Coissac was editor in chief until 1914.

Why do we continue to speak of still projection, although the moving picture is in existence? The art of still projection had at this moment reached perfection, and it was of enormous value to the clergy, both for teaching and for recreational purposes. There were not enough films

available, and they could not serve the same purposes. These people were not activated by curiosity, they had serious and definite aims. In the same way, the Cinema's present glory has not caused the real merits of ordinary projection to be disdained. We can, for instance, maintain with Ph. Villette, director of Lumen publications, that the still picture under given conditions maintains its educational value.

But will the cinema not have something new and piquant to give to the projection sessions, which both teach and entertain? Coissac believes that it will. Lumière's invention arouses his interest all the more on account of the use it makes of the technique with which he himself is preoccupied. Lumiere was besieged by visitors who came to ask questions and to make use of his valuable service. Although he refused to sell his «moulinà images» Meliès, Pathéand Gaumont did not give up hope. The would have their own apparatus. And from 1896 the Bonne Presse also had their apparatus, independent of the Lumière patent, and which worked. It was offered to their projection customers, and in this way the clergy were instrumental in introducing the cinema into their parishes.

Films were needed. At this time they could neither be bought nor hired. If anyone wanted to have a moving picture show he had to make his own films. So production began, and the films were vulgar with Pirou, fantastic with Melies, or verged on drama and comedy with Pathé and Gaumont. One of Pirou's elderly operators, Lear, having taken out a patent on a new apparatus, produced some films which he showed at Olympia. Shortly before this, Lear had met Brother Basile, professor at the St. Nicholas Training College in Vaugiraud, who got him to photograph the «Tableaux vivants» of a Passion Play performed by his pupils. Such tableaux vivants were then in vogue and enjoyed great success.

Lear turned to Brother Basile, with whose directorial skill he was acquainted, for help with the films he needed. He asked him to write some little sketches and to get his pupils to act them, in return promising him an apparatus and a copy of the pictures. A genuine production was under way. Brother Basile wrote the scenario and rehearsed his young people. When the play was ready, Lear took his pictures.

According to Coissac, about a dozen films were made by Lear and Brother Basile: L'aveugle, L'Ordonnance, La Bataille d'Oreillers, Toto Aéronaute, L'Apprenti and an Arroseur Arrosé, which was evidently better than that made by Lumière. No religious subjects; entertainment was the sole aim. Only the coarse and the trivial, whose offensive was opened in the very early days, were avoided.

The name of Brother B a sile is inscribed, without further details, in every history of film. A recent historian does him the honour of assuming that he is a priest. This is a suitable occasion for some biographical details. Born in 1858, Henri Leves que entered the noviciate of the De La Salle Brothers in 1878, and received the name of Brother B a sile Joseph. Appointed to the St. Nicholas de Vaugiraud College, he was to remain there as a professor for more than fifty years, and was affected by the laicist regulations which made him become M. Leves que once more: from 1911—1930 he was the director general of the St. Nicholas schools, consisting of four houses. Humble and eminent at the same time, he was one of the many to be found amongst the Brothers of the Christian Schools who are the core and the greatness of the Institute. En 1933

an anonymous brother produced a biography of Henri Levesque at the general library of the free schools. Few of its 380 pages deal with the cinema, which seems no more than an incident in the career of a fine teacher.

Lear and Brother Basile had the Bonne Presse as a

customer for their productions. F. Vincent de Paul B a i 11 y wanted something better and he took L e a r on one of the pilgrimages to the Holy Land that the Assumptionists had made popular. The result was a series of short films:

«SCENES DE LA VIE A BORD», «PROMENADES SUR LE NIL», «VUES DE CAIRE», «DÉBARQUEMENT A JAFFA», «ENTRÉE DES PÉLERINS DANS LA VILLE-SAINTE», «CHEMIN DE CROIX A JÉRUSALEM». These are the first true Catholic documentaries, and they marked the beginning of the production by means of which the Bonne Presse made the Christian masses aware

Shortly afterwards Coissac undertook to film a Passion play himself. As there were no clearly laid down rules of production, he thought it wise to make use of actors who were playing scenes from the Passion in traditional style at the Invalides fair. Filming was done in the open air, in an unidentifiable part of the rue Félicien-David. Coissac was not proud of the result. «Confused spectacle, ridiculous mimery, frightening looks» he says. But he adds: «And it enjoyed some success». How could this Passion made in the new art form have failed to achieve a measure of success? For our part, we find it both remarkable and necessary that at the advent of the cinema there should be someone to lead the way in injecting the old tradition of the spectacular-style Passion into the new invention.

With the Lear-Basile films, those of the Holy Land and the Passion, the Bonne Presse had a small library at its disposal. In those days films were sold, and not hired, as we shall see later on. They were divided into spools and so it was possible to introduce a quarter of an hour of film into a projection session. During a Congress in 1912, Coissac recalled these facts, and someone asked him: «So you were amongst the very first people to make films?» And he answered rather sharply, «Yes, we were amongst the first: and if we no longer hold the place we held fifteen years ago, it is the fault of Catholics who had no faith in the moving picture's future». This thought, although bitter, is quoted here because of the lesson it contains.

Coissac also emphasised the serious check that was caused to the moving-picture's development by the Charity Bazaar disaster in May, 1897. Owing to carelessness on the part of an operator, some films caught fire, and one hundred and forty souls perished in the conflagration, amongst them the Duchess d'Alencon and numerous members of the aristocracy. The cinema, an unfamiliar device, was blamed. Repercussions were felt throughout the whole of the youthful industry, particularly in Catholic circles. «For a long time», says Coissac, «the words cinematography and oxy-etheric light could not be spoken».

It is nevertheless true, as the Ciné-journal wrote in 1912 and the Cinematografica Italiana about the same time, that the movement for a religious cinema undoubtedly began in France, where it originated at Cours La Reine under the auspices of La Croix.

France is, at least by grand tradition and in its general atmosphere, a Catholic country. For this reason the Cinema comes upon the fact of religion even more here than elsewhere in its general production. This comes about in two ways: firstly in films with a background of Christian mora-

lity; secondly, and more significantly, through certain aspects of sacred history.

The producer is more often concerned with the artistic and financial aspects of a film, or with both together, than with apologetics. All the same, religious sentiment is taken into account, because it is known to exist.

Meliès, for instance, in the very early days of the Cinema, was more preoccupied with the spectacular side of the religious fact, and with how it could enrich the fantastic, which was his speciality. His favourite character is the devil, who played, moreover, a traditional role in the fairy tales of the nineteenth century. Meliès made a Faust, a Magie Diabolique. He made «LE DIABLE A PARIS» which is only a spectacle: but when launching his «DIABLE AU COUVENT» in 1899, he declares in the prospectus: «This film's aim is to show the triumph of Christianity over the powers of darkness». The same confused thinking (to which credit for good intentions must be allowed) produced «LE CHRIST MARCHANT SUR LES EAUX» (1899), «LA PROVIDENCE DE NOTRE DAME DES FLOTS» (1899) and «L'ANGE DE NOEL» (1905). We should hardly call this even religiosity.... But in an age of rather bitter anti-clericalism...

The Passion is a theme which seems to haunt cineastes. In September, 1897, Louis Lumière, either of his own inspiration or through the example of the Bonne Presse, and certainly urged thereto by American insistence, set to work on a Passion. He contemplated filming the Oberammergau play, but decided that the delay would be too great. Interesting representations of the Passion were heard of at Horitz, in Bohemia, and Lumière went there for his film. The operator sent out came back with 15 spools of about 50 ft. each, a total of some 750 ft: a long film for those days. This film enjoyed great success in America.

Léon Gaumont, who, after the death of Lear had taken over again his customers, the Bonne Presse, edited in 1899, a Vie du Christ, 650 ft. in length, based on the masterpieces of painters. In 1902, Charles Pathé embarked upon a Passion with Lucien Nouguet, directed by Ferdinand Zecca, which was made, scene by scene, during the years 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905. No secret is made of its financial aim, since Zeca writes: «The exhibitors are not unheedful of the hold of this kind of show over the masses. Here is a programme ever new, which has the advantage of reaching even the most profane». Christian sympathies are, nevertheless, necessary if any pleasure is to be found in these pious pictures, and this testimony is not without value.

In 1907, Pathé returned to the subject as a whole, and produced the well-known film «LA VIE ET LA PAS-SION DE NOTRE SEIGNEUR JÉSUS-CHRIST, 6.000 feet in length. This film can be considered the first great screen work with a worth-while subject. Its success was enormous. More than 200 copies were sold. In 1935, Pathé was distributing more copies.....

This was not the end of this particular vein. Léon Gaumont had a new VIE DU CHRIST made by Victorin Josset, one of the most highly thought of directors of the early days. Its inspiration was the painting of James Tissot, and a certain grandeur of production was the aim.

These works did no harm to the short documentary-type films, such as the PÈLERINAGE NATIONAL DE LOURDES, 1500 ft. long, which Gaumont made in 1903, and another made by Pathé, which had, it is said, a miracle as well!

The appeal of such production is exclusively popular. These films are made for the audiences of the established halls, still few and far between both in Paris and the provinces, and above all, for the fair-going public. No system of film-hire had yet been established. The exhibitors purchased any productions which took their fancy and showed them in their own halls as they chose, until the film was completely worn out. Such a system was favourable to the fair-halls, with their constantly changing audiences, as they could afford to show the same films over a long period. Production, on the other hand, was not helped, as the sale of a large number of copies was essential if costs were to be recovered.

The sale of films was, however, an interesting affair. The Fascinateur provided the market. It was possible, for instance, to buy a JARDIN DES OLIVIERS from the Bonne Presse Passion, at 80 centimes the metre, a 60 ft. COURONNEMENT D'EPINES from the Pathé Passion for 75 centimes, a 100 ft. RESURRECTION from Gaumont for one franc. Some of the views were in colour and these cost an extra 2 sous. Such details should not surprise. These are the small beginnings of a great industry.

Then, in 1904, came a notable event at the Bonne Presse. The projection branch received official consecration. In the Consistory Hall at the Vatican, Pius X gave evidence of his interest in this modern form of apostolate. In the presence of M. et Mme. Feron-Vrau, Coissac showed Catechism scenes, views of Rome, of Venice, etc. on the screen. The Holy Father indicated his satisfaction by frequent interjections such as «Bene, Benissimo, Ben's fato!» And he watched with pleasure a cinematographic version of some Lourdes scenes: the arrival of pilgrims, carrying of the sick to the grotte, etc. He accepted the apparatus offered by M. Feron-Vrau. He allowed Coissac, who intercepted him as he passed through the Vatican gardens, to photograph him.

Coissac did not rest content with these first signs from Rome. In 1907 he returned there and gave very successful shows in the Holy Father's private apartments in the presence of five cardinals. He was given permission to photograph and film the Vatican palace and gardens. He brought back interesting pictures of the Pope and Cardinal Merry del Val taken in their own studies. He believes himself to be the first to obtain permission to film the Vatican and St. Peter's.

This was encouragement indeed, and led to the setting up of a branch in the Via S. Enfensio, in Rome. The Bonne Presse repertory was enriched and reached a wider public. Coissactook up the camera again to film a very successful Passion play that was being shown at Nancy.

But it was a different matter when the Bonne Presse, in 1909, after most careful preparation launched forth on a great new Passion film, this time a major work 3,000 feet in length. The scenario bore the signature H. le Sablais, a name which barely concealed the identity of P. Honore, a member of the order of the Augustinians of the Assumption, who was to play an important part in the Bonne Presse establishment in the field of the apostolate through entertainment. A famous contemporary artist, Marie del'Ile, had devoted time to the search for suitable sites for the open air scenes. A big artistic effort was made.

This Passion cost 45.000 francs, in those days a fortune. A grand première was held at the Hotel Condé, rue Madame. It enjoyed greater success than any other Passion. Possibly on account of its more obviously Christian spirit?

Père Honoré, whom we meet here, was a great apostle of education by means of visual entertainment. He

is a figure on the grand scale. As well as deep faith, he had a feeling for literature, artistic taste, a talent for organizing visual entertainment and a powerful creative faculty. The founding and management of the «Bon Théâtre», which opened in 1909 in the Jeanne d'Arc hall, Quai de Passy, and provided good entertainment under the auspices of the Association des Artistes Chrétiens, were his work. Again, it was Père Honoré who, in 1913, opened the Bon Cinéma hall in the rue François Ier, the first film to be shown there being a Christian legend, Le Collier de la Vierge.

Père Honoré's film production at the Bonne Presse includes, amongst a fair number of films, various short biblical works as well as LA PASSION, la NATIVITÉ, JÉSUS à NAZARETH, BERNADETTE DE LOURDES, and numerous factual films which dealt with notable religious events, such as Eucharistic congresses, feasts at Lisieux and Lourdes, etc.... Père Honor e became curé of Les Joncherets, on the outskirts of Paris, and died there fairly recently.

Such production was not without merit. M. Paul Feron-Vrau said at a Congress that the treatment of religious subjects on the screen should be done with all possible dignity, and that the slightest mishap can give rise to laughter. «If your aim is to amuse the public it doesn't matter. A comedy gone wrong is still more comical. But if you wish to stress the serious side of life, you will find it more difficult».

The cinema's real blossoming began in about 1912. The notice of the elite had been drawn to the work of the Film d'Art, which had produced amongst other work a BAISER DE JUDAS, from a scenario by Henri Lavedan. In 1912 receipts from Paris shows rose to 65 millions, 35 of which came from the theatre, 7½ from music-halls and 7 from the cinema: although the screen had not yet caught up with the theatre, it held equal place with the music-hall. In the provinces, its vogue was even greater. In an article entitled Le Roi du Jour, Coissac says that the cinema's cheapness is the reason for its popularity; the entrance fee is 5 sous!

The Bonne Presse was equal to the opportunities offered by the situation. A film-hire service was set up, which became a model for the industry. I to I ½ million feet of film were cut up in order to construct several possible programmes. In this way the parish halls then coming into existence could have a repertory. How many of these halls were there? at least four or five hundred, possibly more, all holding more or less regular sessions.

Léon Gaumont organised the Bon Cinéma service for them in 1910, origin of all film classification offices. Gaumont production was seen by the Abbé le Floch and the organisation published a list in which figured only those films which had a certain standard of morality. Two versions were made of some films, one of which was for the Bon Cinéma. This service had a long life. In 1924 it still published a 72 page list.

This is the place to note a grave event, if we are to take the word of L'Histoire du Cinéma by Bardèche and Brasillach. Their book says, in effect, that the cinema's encroachment in the field of religion, particularly around Holy Week, was such as gravely to trouble the Hierarchy. It says that, in 1913, «Pope Pius X, with a sagacity that is beyond praise, forbade the use of film in religious instruction and expressed his formal disapproval of the representation of any sacred event or scenes from the Gospels».

Such a ban apperars all the more surprising in that Pius X chose to see various films himself, naturally on religious subjects. He was present at the showing of a documentary film on the inauguration of the bell-tower of St. Mark's, Venice, on June 20th, 1912: on June 11th, 1913, with Cardinal Merry del Val, his mother and his sisters, he was shown a film of the Malta Eucharistic Congress.

The truth is that Rome was indeed preoccupied with the question of film and slide shows, because such shows were too often given in the churches, and were not always suitable for such a location. A decision of the Congregation of Rites, on December 10th, 1912, proscribed the showing of films and slides inside churches: a useful measure, which led to the building of many parish halls. This is evidently the origin of the regrettable error into which B a r d è c h e and B r a s i l l a c h have fallen.

War came. The French Cinema, which had until then made 90% of the films shown abroad, lost its position, never to recover it.

It is believable that the frequent choice of religious subjects pleased a section of the foreign audiences, and that the taste would endure.

On the advent of peace, «M. Le Sablais», took up production again at the Bonne Presse. Another priest, Père D a n i o n, Eudiste, author of a film on D r a c, made an important travel film at the Bonne Presse, LA CROISIÈRE SAINTE AU PAYS DU CHRIST, and some minor missionary films.

In 1923, Coissac, who had left the Bonne Presse to found Le Cinéopse, completed a long and purely factual film, LA PETITE SAINTE DE LISIEUX, for the Lisieux Carmelites. It gives the whole life of Thérèse Martin and her beatification ceremonies.

But the public prefer religious films with a story. Julien Duvivier's TRAGÉDIE DE LOURDES, which was shown before Cardinal Dubois, Archbishop of Paris, proved this. Duvivier made it quite clear that Catholic propaganda was no part of his aim, and that his backers were not the Bonne Presse, far from it; he would be equally happy to make a film favouring Judaism. This frank commercialism drew the severe critihism of the Abbé Bethléem, whose Revue des Lectures gave evidence of a lively awareness of film matters. He was among those who called for the action subsequently taken by Canon Reymond and Choisir.

Duvivier's scepticism did not prevent his making an ABBÉ CONSTANTIN and an AGONIE DE JÉRU-SALEM, a film toucing on the Passion, for a firm which, without possessing much catholicity, called itself *Credo*. These films of Duvivier's were, after all, without being masterpieces, just as useful as certain commercial films about Lourdes and Lisieux which followed them, but are not worth naming here.

Credo's distributor, Georges Petit, began a series of the Pierre l'Ermite novels with LA FEMME AUX YEUX FERMÉS. Later LA GRANDE AMIE and COMMENT J'AI TUÉ MON ENFANT were made by Aubert. The author of these novels, Mgr. Loutil, was quite willing to appear himself in the part of the priest...... Other times.....! Such films swelled cinema audiences with all the admirers of Pierre l'Ermite and many more.

Meanwhile, certain happy but insufficiently supported Catholic efforts were bearing fruit. We see the development of the *Etoile-Film* at Lyon, under the brilliant direc-

tion of M. Paul Bidault (brother of the future Foreign

Minister).

From 1912 the Etoile was looked on in Lyon as a Catholic association with the aim of spreading sound principles by means of film. Much was achieved. But the Etoile of 10 years later has a larger ambition. It caters for the industry as a whole, manufactures apparatus, hires out and eventually makes films. Its first publications are religious documentaries such as LYON-FOURVIÈRES, PÉLERINAGE DE LA SALETTE, a LOURDES film, and some congresses.

Within a short time longer films are being produced; René Bazin's La Terre Qui Meurt, and La Croix sur le Rocher, Crainquebille, l'Ame de Bled, l'Enfant de Cirque, Le Roi Mendiant, La Servante, the first version of the Dames aux

Chapeaux Verts, etc.

It can be seen that the Etoile, with Catholic backing and genuinely Catholic in aim as in direction, attaches less importance to films having religious themes than to works that are based on a background of Christian morals, or are entertainment pure and simple: these are entirely suitable, for the cinema is not meant exclusively for edification. Nevertheless, the Etoile is not primarily secular; it performed the useful service of getting foreign films with a religious tendency into French distribution, where they would not otherwise have been seen: among such films are the American works, THE BLASPHEMER and THE TRANSGRESSOR, the great Italian film, SAINT FRANÇOIS D'ASSISE, a German work, LA DESTRUCTION DE JÉRUSALEM, etc....

As Etvile developed it came to Paris, and had branches in the main centres. For fifteen years it carried on its arduous struggle, but it was not, unfortunately, able to survive the arrival of the talkies. It produced some good films, and launched directors and stars. After the Bonne Presse it reprensented the most effective and most courageos Catholic effort in production and distribution.

The Astor-Films Society was another important but too shortlived venture. Its aims are described in a brochure by Charles Pichon, which was entitled Is The Film of Ideas a Possibility? This brochure, which is still available to-day, was followed up by a second publication: «What you Can Do About The Cinema». Although just as genuinely Catholic as Etoile, Astor-Films worked exclusively on films dealing with social questions. It produced a version of Paul Hervieu's LE DÉDALE, against divorce, VOCATION, from the Book by Avesnes, Balzac's LA COUSINE BETTE, which shows up the pests that break up homes. The presentation of the DEDALE at the Mogador was an event. Cardinal Dubois was present with Mgr. de Guebriant; the Protestant Federation and the Grand Rabbi were represented. It is sad that the courageous work of Astor-Films should have come to an end. We have missed many films on this account.

We are now outside, or nearly outside the heroic epoch. In excellent articles in the May, 1927, and December 5th,

1928, editions of *Etudes*, P. Jalabert drew attention to the educational film. Firms came into being; *Le Film Catholique*, rue de l'Amiral-Mouchez, issued catechetical films on the sacraments and vocations. Several houses distributed educational films: *Le Cinéma dans les Oeuvres*, by Jean Thoquet, *Le Film Rural*, at Versailles, Robert Larchier's works, etc.

Pathé-Rural, at that time the greatest achievement since the invention of the cinema, was, with the Pathé-Baby, the purveyor of new gear, of which, largely by means of the Bonne Presse, the country clergy made great use. Pathé-Rural considers its Catholic clientele in so far as it always has more copies of the films recommended «for all» than of the others. The Pathé-Baby is sufficiently used to warrant the publication of a pampolet, Cinémathèque du Pathé-Baby Sté Catholique by the Abbé Paul C e z a t.

Elsewhere the long reign of BEN HUR is a landmark. Everyone saw the film. Contradictory opinions appeared in *Le Correspondant*, *La Croix*, *La Revue des Lectures*: and the records of this controversy were to be very instructive in judging religious films.

In his first sound films, Léon Gaumont reproduced the features, gestures and voices of the great Catholic speakers of the day: Père Lhande, Père Sanson, Père de la Boullaye, the future Cardinal Gerlier. It was the dawn of the talkies.

On July 31st, 1926, the newspaper l'Opinion published, under the signature of Henri Clouzot, a curious article on Le Film Catholique. Mentioning the numerous religious productions that had been undertaken, and calling, with reason, for works of greater artistry and depth, M. Clouzot writes: «We should like to see profoundly human films, impregnated with Catholicism, as we have seen certain American films dessicated with Puritanism». He considers that «a Christian drama by Claudel, a novel by Baumann, even Bernanos' Le Soleil de Satan, could inspire poems in film while we wait for our Catholic writers to produce original scenarios».... The most unexpected aspect of this article, the whole of which is worthy of quotation, is that M. Clouzot, seeking the Church's opinion of the Cinema, makes this appeal: «I admit that I await the Papal Encyclical on the moving picture with some curiosity» .He had only 10 years to wait for Vigilanti cura.

Ten years that were not wasted. While Clouzot was writing, a priest of the Puy diocese, Canon Joseph Reymond, was preparing to found the Centrale Catholique du Cinéma (C. C. C.), which was to become, nationally and internationally, an instrument of Catholic action in the whole field of the Cinema. Canon Simon in suppressed his Carnet du Film, started at Dijon in 1924, in faveur of Canon Reymond of Canon Reymond of Canon Reymond which reviewed and classified all films. When Vigilanti Cura arrived it was to find an organisation already hard at work, which only needed to be developed; and it can be said that Catholic thought has not failed to keep abreast of the cinema's development.

Jean Morienval.



LO DUCA, writer (La Sphère de Platine and Journal Secret de Napoléon Bonaparte are his two most recent novels) historian of the cinema (Georges Meliès-Mage, Histoire du Cinéma, Technique du Cinéma, Louis Lumière, Inventor), he is also a specialist in animated cartoons about which he has written a new book (Le Dessin Animé, History, Aesthetic, Technique, with a preface by Walt Disney, 180 pages, 259 illustrations, 8 colour plates).

Animated Cartoons

CINEMA CALLIGRAPHY

I ormerly, writing has known Calligraphers who have diverted it from its subject — Jean de Beauchesne of the XVI Century, Edward Cocker of the XVII, the unfettered Romantics, Lepine or Eliodoro Andreoli. Cocker, with the cursive English handwriting composed «The Pen's Trans-

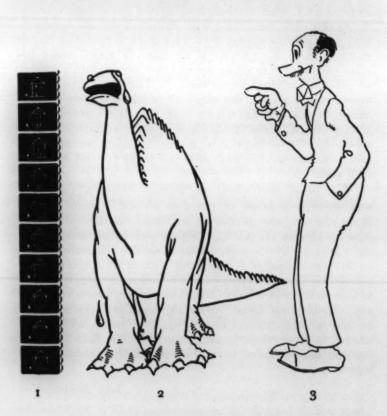


Fig. 1. A French animated cartoon by Emile Cohl: «LE RETA-PEUR DE CERVELLE», 1911.

2. One of the first American cartoons: «GERTIE THE DINOSAUR», Mc Cay, 1909. Fig. 3. An English character: «MUTT AND JEFF».



Moreau: The winged horse (1844)

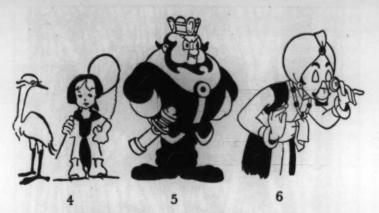
cendence». The cinema, new kind of writing, Elie Faure calls it. For 40 years its calligraphy, more or less distinguished, cultivates an art which has nothing of the cinema, except its «tools» cartoons.

As a matter of fact, cartoons preceded the cinema, but after the initial exploit of the Parisian artist Emile Cohl, it seems to have become the property of the Americans.

It suits certain critics to heap abuse on American cartoons, and in particular on Walt D is ney — I grant that Anglo-Saxon humour, if childish, — the animals of Grand-ville, comic mongrels, which the Italians call «fumetti» (puffs of smoke), — irritates some audiences, but Americans haven't the monopoly of the anthropomorphic animal, it has its admirers in England, France, Czeckoslovakia, Spain, Hungary and above all in Russia.

The thunderbolts have been launched in Moscow after ten years of childish success — against these beasts with human sentiments. — One was shocked by a recent cartoon where a bear, who had lost its tail in the war, was given another by the Red-Gross. The bear has unheard of adventures because it is wearing peacock's feathers - tendentious cartoon certainly, but resembling hundreds of other Russian cartoons whose poetic stupidity and sentimentality has been accepted since 1934 in the worst Silly Symphonies.

This type of cartoon is linked up with the use of the «gag» and goes side by side with cartoons less favoured by the public, from the intellectual surrealism of Andreiev to the popular surrealism of Prévert. One



4. A Russian cartoon by Evmenenko, 1936.

5. «THE KING OF LILLIPUT», by Max Fleischer.
6. «AMIN AND THE LAMP OF ALADIN», by A. Bioletto, (1945).

criticizes the successful cartoons because they are comical, others find fault with the poetry and intelligence of the more sensitive cartoons. It seems to me that there is a misunderstanding of the English word cartoon which also means caricature. «Cartoon» comes from the Italian word «Cartone» — thick paper — a metonymical rough sketch or pen drawing. The English word is used for comical things — caricatures, cartoons. It is obvious that it is not the only method of this kind of cinema, but is is useless to decry the stupidity of man, or to whip the cat even «Krazy Cat». We must admit that Walt Disney has sometimes succeeded with an exquisite sense of poetry, a humour and tenderness that has nothing in common with traditional art. The diagrams are sufficient to release certain emotions. Perhaps, tired of his unprecedented success in the history of popular imagery, Walt Disney essays more and more ambitious territory. It is against such artistic pretentions that we must protest. The universal success of Walt Disney takes away his right to be mediocre.

MELODY TIME was awarded the prize at Venice in 1948. In reality the LITTLE SOLDIER was far better with its 300 metres, its inventive qualities, its drawings, its taste — but obviously the judges had been tipped the wink to award the prize to MELODY TIME.

Fifteen years ago Disney undertook to teach us a new language with his story drawings. We have learnt it certainly, but Disney still leaves us hungry when he only gives us the first words of his old repertoire. In his first colour cartoon one saw a magic paint brush which left a draught board in its path. Thousands of clevernesses of this kind belong to a sort of mental language, which takes all element of surprise from the innumerable «gags», the former spark becomes a laboured fire.

In recent films these repetitions are aggravated by mixtures of three colours painted in, and coloured photography. The decline of animated caricature is a phenomenon which touches us closely. We would at least, in the absence of new inspiration expect some elementary taste in the last «creations» of Walt Disney. The applause of crowds means nothing, since we know that tickling evokes laughter as well as wit - Bergson formerly exhausted this subject.

But what to do in view of the monopoly by Disney, this monopoly which deforms the taste and judgement of the audience? Only by European cartoons can a reaction come.

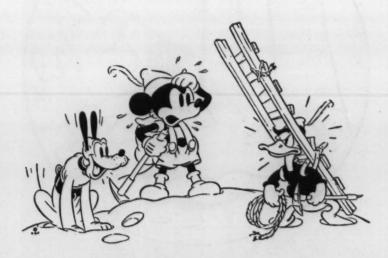
One also says «Make puppets like the Czechs, it is easier and cheaper than cartoons». There is nothing in common with the two except the taking of photographs. And we see that in America George Pal, who made plastic puppets in Holland, is no rival to Disney. We must, therefore, try to get the international public to educate the audiences, to show them that cartoons are not of necessity «comic». We don't suggest teaching the public, but a simple idea which allows them to enjoy a Grimault or a Mc-Laren without being distracted by their poetry or their melancholy.

Each of us should make an inventory of cartoons present and future. For the present we know that American cartoons have arrived at a too visible saturation point. The technical differences, the ease, more or less of the set up cannot lure us. The mastery of the Walt Disney craftsmen are equal to the craftsmen of the M.-G.-M., but they refuse to see the cartoons from any other angle than the comic and the affected. Surrealism, like the pepper of Freud, is seeping into the Hollywood cuisine — in Dumbo as in Woman Warner's Buddy. We can achieve certainly some minutes of entertainment, a few seconds of poetry and some millions of spectators initiated for the first time in the magic of humour, understood the needs of millions of men. In any case the American cartoon has reached an impass in the case of those who set themselves the problem of pure creation. Don't let us be confused by the relaxation or the digestion of the audience.

In Canada we have a timid school which succeeded with Norman McLaren and Len Lye; - Alexeieff, we know, has gone further. There are in some Canadian cartoons exquisite things, but the technical means are not sufficient for the high ambitions of these artists.

In England we are not far from the standardized style of Hollywood, and it would be difficult to find any difference between a film of Anson Dyer and David Hand, and a film of Walter Lantz. The social contents of certain English cartoons is often very important, but de Maistre, La Tour du Pin or Marx in Cartoons would not be very

Italy has known the adventure of certain humourous artists who have confused a drawing comic in itself with the funny idea of a cartoon. One can see Debout with his graphical sadism is lost in cartoons. Italy, therefore, has not



7. Three Walt Disney characters in «ALPINE CLIM-BERS», (1936).

been able to use successfully good artists for children and professional caricaturists such as Antonio R u b i n o («FROG COUNTRY») Carlo and Vittoria C o s s i o («CLOWN IN THE WOOD»), S g r i l l i («ANACLETO AND THE POLE-CAT»), A. B i o l e t t o («AMIN AND ALADIN'S LAMP») and Nino P a g o t («LALLA, LITTLE LALLA»). The Russian cartoons suffer from the same blind alley as the Americans, without the redeeming circumstances of strong technique. Apart from the music which is often of a remarkable local inspiration, the cartoons habitually plagiarise the Anglo-Saxon style. Colours lose their effect against that which technicolour offers, real palette of Epinal's «SONG OF GLADNESS» imitates «SNOWWHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS» and «PUSS-INBOOTS» (1938) has the same inspiration as «SNIFFLES».

Denmark is in its second stage of long cartoons, but here also, if only to mention «THE MAGIC LIGHTER» of Allan Johnsen, colour without charm, American drawings, vulgar animation. In Spain they have made a fairy tale of 2200 meters («THE CHEVALIER GABANCITO of Arturo Moreno), it is worse, colour, animation, drawing all pretentious and doomed to failure. A few good Czech cartoons are not enough (especially with their set purpose of materialism) to create a school or to rival seriously the American production. Jiri Trnka, author of «THE PRESENT» and «THE ATOM AT THE CROSS ROADS» ought to surround himself with more poets and fewer propagandists.

There only remains the French cartoons — Paul Grim a ult has really got something new, not ideas, but works in which there is absolute consistency — witty drawings, poetical subjects, thrilling music, impeccable animation — severe cutting. We can reproach Grimault in the name of a coarse public with being too subtle in a world where success goes hand and hand with vulgarity but the «THIEF OF LIGHTNING CONDUCTORS» and «THE LITTLE



Fig. 8. «PUNCINELLO IN THE WOOD», Italian cartoon by C. V. Cossio.

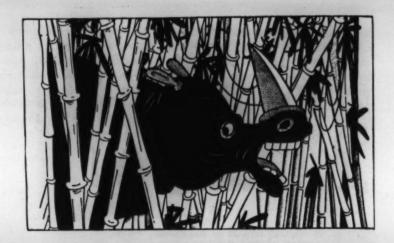


Fig. 9. WHY THE RHINOCEROS HAS A WRINKLED HIDE by V. Suteyev. (U. R. S. S.).

SOLDIER» are works of art for all those who like poetry and who are not ashamed of their emotions. Grimault shows an entire mastery in his artistic and cinegraphic technique (I believe this is the first time this word has been used). It is a miracle of balanced beauty, together with refined humour. Paul Grimault is going to succeed with his long film «THE STEPHERDESS AND THE SWEEP» which will define without doubt the limits of a huge domain. But for Grimault, for Khodataeva, or for Mc Laren we have thousands of cartoons to mark time and for those thousands who appreciate Grimault's poetry we have millions who jump with joy at the tickling of Mickey or of Donald Duck. It would be a lost cause if it were not for the future of cartoons, a future where perhaps the poetry of Grimault, of Prévert and of de Kosma will become part of the ordinary language. The collective work of cartoonists will take us very far. In addition to a kind of technical ecstasy, about which we shall speak later, there still remains the infinite world of mythology, «of all possible mythology» said Alain.

After the two dimensions of cartoons (which will never become three in spite of the «multiplane of Burbank») we will go naturally above all dimensions to the absolute abstraction. It is a question of applying a system which is similar to the cartoon, although it is a direct result of technical experience in the registration of sounds — the «talkie». This technique was born in Germany, thanks to the work of a Swiss, Rudolph Phenninger, and the founder of the German cartoon, Oskar Fischinger. Since 1922 Phenninger analysed the diagram of sound — the principle was very simple, it amplified on photographic paper the registration obtained in film by the ordinary procedure. On this enlargement it «cleaned» and corrected the sounds giving them theoretical purity which the instrumentation and plant had taken away. Thus one had absolute sound with no contact with matter, timbre determined with the abstract severity of a creation liberated from the slavery of an orchestra, of words and apparatus, without counting that by this procedure one could escape even the laws of harmony, «invent» new instruments or at least their sounds, and find new acoustics. — Phenninger originated this medium in his «LARGO OF HANDEL» and a cartoon «PITSCH AND PATSCH». He has dreamed for many years of a machine to write sound, a machine that will compose like a typewriter.

Oskar F is chinger vs research has created a musical world which has nothing to do with the traditional registration — Fischinger was at first intrigued by the hypothesis of a drawing, presented according to a decorative rhythm, giving sound. In effect the «reading» of his drawing upset the artists, of the new sound obtained by geometrical motives which resembled nothing ever known before. Further, the drawing of the cobra haje, stylised by the Egyptians, brought to the sound track a noise like that of the serpent. Concentric rings become different sounds, and a pearl necklace a bassoon — it was indeed a method of synthesis in music.

The Russians again took up this work, Avraamov, Iankovski, Voinov, F. Cholpo, perfected the mysterious «sound drawing». They first made a film in which one note had different timbres, sending out different rhythms. It proved that one could make sonority which has the timbre of a piano, whilst appearing to be given by a violin bow. Stretching this principle, the sounds of a piano possess the timbre of a violin, the flute sounds like a cornet and the violin going beyond its usual octaves becomes a saxophone, violincello etc. The result of these researches was written of in a prophetic note by Iolev: «The violin will enter into the field of the viola and Violincello, going beyond the contra bass, the trombone the lowest instrument of the brass, will rise above the highest - the trumpet — instead of titilating the triangles will sing. The piano, keeping the purity of its tone, will sound like the harmonium, increasing gradually from pianissimo to fortissimo — the flute will be lower than the clarinet. One will have sweet passages between violins and clarinet and cornets and tympanons. The break between the timbre of the bow, of the concertina and the percussion and of song, will be filled up. The orchestra in picture will present a perfect continuity of tone, from the most tender flute to the contrabass».

The masterpiece of this pictured music was a fox-trot by the grandson of Rimsky-Korsakoff «THE WHITE



Fig. 10. The two latest Canadian designs by Norman Mc Laren recall the first animated cartoons by the French Emile



Fig. 11. Disney's large-sized Pinocchio beside the small Italian Pinocchio.

MONKEY» (3 minutes) which utilises the timbre of singing of scissors — Voinov has produced also a Prelude of Rachmaninoff (3 minutes).

We are far from Walt D is n e y for whom a symbolic grimace or a scale suffice for certain effects, we are nearer to Grimault. We see perfectly what Kosma could give us with this music drawn as the image conceived for the illustrator.

We are limited here graphically by the cartoon and perhaps above all these possible calligraphers. Above all one loses onself down the extreme paths of para-aestheticism, where music and colour meet, the image engendered automatically by music of the cinematograph in light polarises the material to the work. A film which scents the air. What do I know as yet! The greater our knowledge the vaster seems our horizon and the beauties which remain to be discovered.

The cartoon will one day be the tool of the new art which will have contempt for our fixed formula — men's fantasy is expressed by fairy tale and legend which are in defiance of dimension, systems and human measures. One must dig into this wealth, and once more teach the world to dream, to look higher than the earthy barriers of matter.

Co Duca

FROM DE LA FONTAINE TO "PINOCCHIO"

I went into the magic forest. There was a general bustling and excitement: the leaping of soft-pawed creatures, flights of hinds and bucks, the rustling sound of wings, frogs croaking in the pools, — «Down with the profane intruder!» A strong wind suddenly arises:

«A hellish hubbub making, Hissing, puffing, blowing, Rending in its stormy passage Ill-fixed rooves and fragile boats».

Can't you just see it? This hurricane? The tiles flying away one by one; the entire roof eventually capsising; and on the mountainous ocean, the little coracle riding the crest of the billows which shatter noisily as they fall!

Who is it that presents these vivid pictures to you? Who has shown us the way into the magic forest; into this living and sensitive Nature? Is it La Fontaine? Or is it Walt Disney?

This gigantic oak tree, stretching to catch me with its long, crooked fingers because I have dared to violate the mystery of the woodland: is it not the same great tree which terrified little Snowhite, or perhaps the one that spoke to the Rose?

And this Cat which suddenly appears: — velvety, long-tailed, brindled, humble of mien,

«With its modest look and with shining eye,

Sweet, benign and gracious».

I recognise him; it is Figaro, who rolled his eyes so wheedlingly while his master, Gepeto, caressed him. It is the same country for both the poets: talking flowers, living clocks, civilised animals, which Disney brings to us by means of film, while for La Fontaine, it is a book of Fables from which burst forth hundred of little creatures, pouring out, prancing and bounding around before our eyes for hours. Picture books; illustrated albums; moving pictures which, once confined within the limits of the page, are now liberated on the screen and free to whirl about before our fascinated gaze, a very swarm of miraculous images.

Design on the one hand and animation on the other. One had long realised the marvellous ability that was La Fontaine's to sketch in a few sure touches the complete outline of his characters: «Dame Goat with her long corsage», or the «rat, full of embonpoint, plump and well-nourished». Is he to be criticised

because he used only charcoal? It is true he worked in monochrome; he knew nothing of Technicolour (which Walt Disney has both used and abused) but he knew how to impart the illusion of colour — by the absolute rightness of his design and the certainty and clarity of his choice of medium.

It is here that the two painter poets seem to coalesce — to be working in co-operation. The pages of the Fabulist bubble over with enchanting images no less miraculously than does the film of the American producer. He endows them with intelligence; he enriches them with overtones; he provides our senses with a rare enjoyment: a feast for the spirit.

On the other hand, Walt Disney transfuses into the Frenchman's creatures a more lively and richer blood; he communicates to them a more exuberant vitality; irrigates their dryness; incarnates La Fontaine's rationalism.

Let us take the example of the under-sea expedition in which the frog invites the over-credulous rat, promising to satisfy:

«Curiosity, the pleasures of travelling,

And the way public things are organised

In the water world».

At once Pinocchio and Jiminy come to life before us! Do not they also plunge into the shadowy depths of the submarine world? They come nose to nose with the deep-sea dogfish, already painted for us by La Fontaine; dogfish:

«Who for hundreds of years, under the sea,

Have known the ancients of that vast empire».

Decors and setting are the same for both. On the branches of an ancient oak we hear the chatter of birds who fly hither and thither around the Young Princess: — the dawn, perfumed with thyme and rose, shines for the Dwarfs who have harboured Snowhite; and during the dark-blue and scintillating night which lulls the slumbers of Gepeto, watch and toymaker, I recall how the poet says:

«The night within her veil encloses In due time the starry spaces»

But these are but random suggestions, harmonious murmurings, sudden likenesses, dreamy outlines which spring to the mind. With Walt Disney as with La Fontaine, Nature is but a thin veneer for the meanderings of the subconscious. The XVIIth century Frenchman and the XXth century American have controlled and clarified and civilised it for us, so that there is left in it none of that semi-religious awe with which we view the danse of Kaa or the Elephant ballet in Kipling's forest glades. These creatures, dwarfs, artisans or animals, manifest for us all the fine shades of the human personality. They resolve, as in a spectral analysis, the complexes of the human soul. Not just one peculiarity or imperfection of human conduct do we see portrayed for us but the whole conspectus of human personality and individuality.

The naive Pinocchio reminds us of the countrymouse who is fascinated by every fun-fair novelty: the patter of Stromboli, parading in front of the puppet stage with talk that has already been evoked for us by La Fontaine's monkey:

«Walk up! Walk up! Come, gentlemen! I can guarantee a hundred different tricks...

He cantalk...you can hear him...He knows how to dance; (We recall here Pinocchio's Russian dances)

He can perform feats of every kind..

Jumps through hoops... and all for sixpence;

No! I'll take one penny! If you are not satisfied

I will return your money at the gate!»

Let us take at random another example which shows the two authors using the same touch of realism. It is the case of Master Reynard; Compère Renard, Captain Renard, as La Fontaine calls him: «The Big Bad Wolf», according to Disney. It is the same character in both media. The «bon vivant», leader of the gay life; here we see him seated at table, for

«A good appetite is the most important thing in the world,

A Reynard never wants for anything!»

Disney pictures him with a fine cigar. Cunning above all else, yet he brings the same old gags from his bag of tricks; the same smooth words with which to seduce Maître Corbeau are used to enchant the simple Pinocchio:

«What a fine-looking bird you are! I think you are beautiful!

The most distinguished inhabitant in the woodland».

The Crow preens himself; Pinocchio could hardly feel more flattered.

Then we have the brave Gedeon, the Big Bad Wolf's buddy; simple and dangerous; until he is bludgeoned by his friend after the example of the Bear in the Fable.

Those everlasting conflicts; between cunning and stupidity; innocence and cruelty La Fontaine and Walt Disney both regard them with a smile of amusement. We have malice abounding in the fables; and American humour slyly smiling at twenty different expressions of ill-ease: La Fontaine's melancholy and Snowhite's lament; then a flash of irony — the «Young Widow» as effervescent as the domesticated Jiminy and as quickly roused to emotion; then a surrender to abandon, an elegy to Solitude and a warning to some small town: in brief, every possible sentiment lightly touched upon and as lightly forsaken.

A charming attitude to life in which, carefree and spontaneous as it is, it never labours the obvious and inevitable moral point. Like Disney, La Fontaine may rest assured that posterity will award him the distinction of being an Official Conscience (how proud Jiminy was about this office!) But quite seriously one recognises in both of them the same aspirations towards a better and purer world — as it was before the Fall — towards the same paradise of innocent childhood. It is in this region that the two poets tend to become indistinguishable. — «With a Song and a Smile» — here we have the maker of the busy and exuberant dwarfs: and the Cobbler who «sings from morn till the rise of the moon»; whom have we here?

And the epigraph written by their author for the twelve books of Fables: does it not also perfectly summarize the outlook and spirit of the creator of «Snowhite» and «Pinocchio»?

Robert Couffignal



A NEW MEDIUM OF EXPRESSION:

Animated diagram films

The animated drawing and diagram makes one of the most interesting of film techniques, one of the original and new modes of expression which the art of the screen allows of. The humourous animated cartoon, which has often been described and studied, has become popular; the technical animated diagram finds its place especially in documentary, educational and scientific films. Dovetailed into sequences of actual pictures, it underlines, picks out, concentrates upon particular details, effects syntheses which actual photographs could not reproduce or make sufficiently clear. Being an exceptionally precise and expressive medium of simplification, of stylising, of analysis and of demonstration, it has come to have an essential part to play in the making of pedagogical films. The principles underlying the animated drawing, whether technical or humourous, are clearly much the same; both kinds effect a synthesis of movement by means of drawings and diagrams representing the successive phases of a gesture, a movement or a change. All the same, the methods of producing their results are somewhat different. In the technical animated diagram the animation has to be rigorously exact and cannot admit of the slightly wavering outline which is proper to the humourous cartoon and from which indeed it produces certain comic effects. It has therefore been necessary to drop the use of «cells» and to adopt mechanical processes, systems of very minute guide-marks, combinations of articulated masks or screens, axes and controls as complete and precise as those of a machine and regulated in advance to the tenth of a millimetre.

The technical animated drawing in instructional films.

Our schools, at all levels of teaching, have at their disposal an abundant collection of academic films, many of which are excellent both in the quality of their production and in their teaching value. Amongst the most remarkable those of M. Marc Cantagrel are well to the fore. Most of them have been made for the cine-library of the higher commercial schools; others are films for technical studies produced for various economic organisations. Amongst the fifty or sixty films on «Technology of Machines and Merchandise» which he has produced let us make mention of LA MALTERIE ET LA BRASSERIE (THE MALT-HOUSE AND THE BREWERY), LA FABRICATION MÉCANIQUE DES TUILES (THE MECHANICAL MANUFACTURE OF TILES), LA VERRERIE (GLASS-MAKING) in four parts: window-glass, bottles, etc., LA FABRICATION DU COKE MÉTALLURGIQUE (THE MANUFACTURE OF METALLURGIC COKE), LE SERVICE DES EAUX DE LA VILLE DE PARIS (THE WATER SERVICE IN THE CITY OF PARIS), I'AMÉ-NAGEMENT DES FORTIFICATIONS DE PARIS

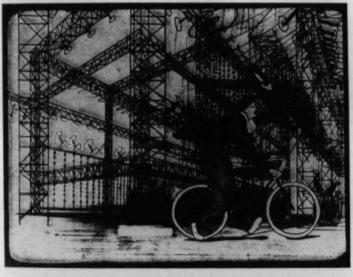
THE LAYOUT OF THE PARIS FORTIFICATIONS), l'ORGANISATION DU TRAVAIL DANS LES ATE-LIERS DE RÉPARATION DE LA COMPAGNIE GÉNÉRALE D'ENTRETIEN DU MATÉRIEL DE CHEMINS DE FER (ORGANISATION OF WORK IN THE REPAIR SHOPS OF THE GENERAL COMPANY FOR MAINTENANCE OF RAILWAY SUPPLIES), l'ORGANISATION DU TRAVAIL DANS UNE USINE NE TRAVAILLANT PAS EN SÉRIE (ORGANISATION OF WORK IN A FACTORY NOT WORKING IN SERIES)..... his film, entirely in animated diagrams, THE WESTINGHOUSE BRAKE (six reels, some 2000 metres), a very remarkable effort, is used for the instruction of personnel in railway sections and workshops. At the Scientific Film Centre of the Conservatory of Arts and Crafts M. Cantagrel has made two highly instructional films LE GYROSCOPE (THE GYROSCOPE), and LA FORCE CENTRIFUGE (CENTRIFUGAL FORCE); he has also prepared the material for the making of LES HOR-LOGES (CLOCKS), and LES ENGRENAGES CYLIN-DRIQUES DROITS (CYLINDRICAL GEARS), (layout, fitment and adjustment) which earned the National Grand Prix of the French Cinema (1938) For advanced teaching he has made a series of five films for the Librarie Larousse: LES MOUVEMENTS DE L'HOMME (MOVEMENTS OF MAN), LES TROIS ÉTATS DES CORPS, l'AIR, l'EAU, LES COMBUSTIONS VIVES (THE THREE STATES OF THE BODY, AIR, WATER, LIVING COMBUSTION). For the School of Specialised Engineering in the National Rubber Institute he has contributed three films on Rubber, its manufacture and various uses; this series is completed by CHEMINS SANS ORNIERES (ROADS WITHOUT RUTS), meant for halls and rural cinema circuits, explaining the advantage of the rubbertyred wheel in agriculture. In the course of recent years the production programme of school films by the Ministry of National Education has entrusted to him the making of the following films; ILLUSTRATION D'UNE LEÇON SUR LA MÉTALLURGIE DU FER (ILLUSTRATION OF A LESSON ON THE METALLURGY OF IRON), CONTRIBUTION A L'ÉTUDE DE LA MACHINE A VAPEUR (CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF THE STEAM ENGINE) (graphs and thermal output), POLYGONES RÉGULIERS (REGULAR POLYGONS), FAMILLES DE DROITES, FAMILLES DE PARA-BOLES (CLASSES OF PARABOLAS): he is at present engaged upon LIEUX GÉOMÉTRIQUES SIMPLES (SIMPLE GEOMETRICAL LOCI).

In these films the technical animated diagram occupies a considerable place; it is the reason of their remarkable value for demonstration purposes. In LA MÉTALLUR-

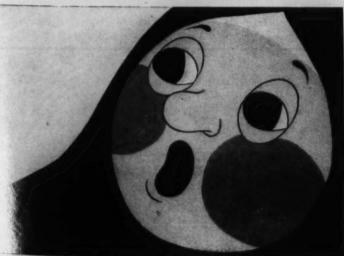
Animated cartoons (see the article by Lo Duca)



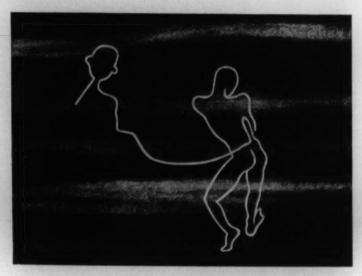
Caricature of mice in Egypt at the time of the Pharoas, discovered by Max Pieper (Papyrus, Cairo, Agz 35, 1897, 140, reproduced in the «German Archeological Yearbook» 48, 1933, p. 41.)



A picture from «LA JOIE DE VIVRE» by Hoppin and Gross (1934)



A Czech cartoon (1947) «GRANDFATHER PLANTS THE BEETROOT»



«BOUNDARY LINES» by Philip Stopp



One of the latest Russian cartoons «SONG OF HAPPINESS» (1948)

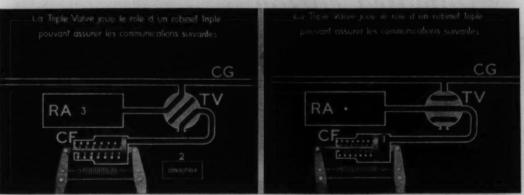




Two characters from Paul Grimault's «LE PETIT SOLDAT» (1948) and «LA BERGERE ET LE RAMONEUR» (1949)

Animated Diagram Films (see article by Pierre Michaut)

1st position

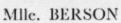


and position

Marc CANTAGREL: «LE FREIN WESTINGHOUSE» The plug allows a three-way usage



Four successive phases of the development



The variation of the apparent height of the sun according to the seasons



ATLANTIC FILM

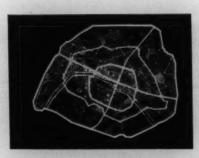


a capital in

«ARABIA AND ISLAM»

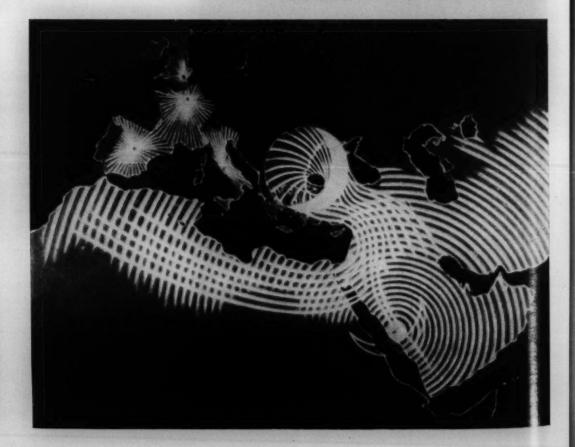






«20 Centuries of Parisian History»





GIE DU FER (THE METALLURGY OF IRON), for example, or in LE FREIN WESTINGHOUSE (THE WES-TINGHOUSE BRAKE), each operation is first shown in actual pictures of the real thing and then reconstructed in animated diagram. The mobility of the camera and the varied angles of the shots, the device of slow-motion and of acceleration (and, if so required, of reversing shots) effectively allow of the breaking up of all the movments as well as of the most intricate mechanisms by the enumeration and separation of their various phases or of their various component parts and elements. But above all, the animated diagram, which isolates a certain part of the machine, is substituted for the actual picture and reproduces the movement already seen in its actual form, brings to the presentation and demonstration a clarity which is irresistible.

Particularly remarkable was the sequence in LA FA-BRICATION DU VERRE ET DES BOUTEILLES (THE MANUFACTURE OF GLASS AND BOTTLES), detailing the work of a certain automatic apparatus, the Feeder which allows a drop of molten glass paste to fall into metal moulds mounted on a tilt. The showing of this mechanism alternately in slow motion and at normal speed, the different angles of the shots and outline diagrams, make it possible to let students see clearly the complex working of this piece of mechanism better even than could be done by a visit to the factory itself. It is also common knowledge that, in the case of a counterfeit of this automatic apparatus, M. Cantagrel was commissioned to make a short film bringing out the main features of the case which was projected before the Court.

Film is thus seen to be extending from the domain of natural history and geography in the direction of physics and mathematics. Now that the idea of the school screen has become more familiar, the need arises to animate what is written on the blackboard and to show it under varied aspects. When in the course of a class on spatial geometry the teacher, to make himself understood, leaves the blackboard and begins to explain by gestures the properties of the figures, at that point the film should come to his assistance. Preceded and accompanied by the master's commentary, it can demonstrate in a vivid way the continuous evolution of the figures or diagrams which he himself can only outline imperfectly and by way of a number of sepa-

rate phases.

The process employed is based on the use of a dead black background upon which the drawings appear in white or in shades of gray. Mr. Cantagrel has determined on a range of seven shades of gray, starting from white. This black background, which leaves no impression on the emulsion of the film, makes it possible to introduce a number of successive super-impositions which are indispensable if several synchronised movements are to be registered sepa-

rately.

The merely curious, or even unsympathetic, viewer of M. Cantragel's films cannot fail to be struck by the clearness, precision and sure method of the exposition and demonstration From a purely aesthetic point of view he cannot but admire the fine precision of the symbols developed in a brilliant and always constant light, the perfect regularity of the movement in its unvarying smoothness and constancy, the balance of the sequences and the rhythm governing them both as to their length and the choice of scale. He will admire, in fine, the artistic sense apparent throughout and musical in quality which controls the animation. Shown in France and elsewhere, in numerous

teachers' meetings or conference courses and in a variety of ways, M. Cantagrel's films gained a high repute in the last Biennial Festival at Venice; his FAMILLES DE DROITES, FAMILLES DE PARABOLES (CLASSES OF PARABOLAS) gained the Silver Medal in the Physics and Mathematics Section.

Amongst the teaching films produced in France, based on the animated diagram, we will call attention to the shorts devised some considerable time ago by M. Raoul Ponchon, on LES PROPRIÉTÉS DES MOUVE-MENTS VIBRATOIRES (THE PROPERTIES OF VIBRATORY MOVEMENTS). Schoolmasters had observed that this was a difficult subject for most children to assimilate. If the matter is approached from the mathematical angle the pupil loses contact with reality; if it is approached by way of pictorial explanations the exposition calls for an effort of imagination that few children are capable of making. By showing «animated pictorial explanations» the film brings into teaching a new element whose value has already proved itself efficacious. The film was prepared and made by M. Reihaux and the Atlantic Film Studio. M. Ponchon thereupon produced a series of animated diagram films: MOUVEMENT RECTILIGNE UNI-FORME, MOUVEMENT RECTILIGNE VARIÉ, MOUVEMENT CIRCULAIRE, ETC. (UNIFORM RECTIINEAR MOVEMENT, CIRCULAR MOVE-MENT ETC.).

For primary teaching M. Jean Brerault, a Paris teacher and author of some fifty first-class teaching films, uses the animated diagram occasionally for his geography films and in a systematic way for : LES LEVIERS, COM-MENT FONCTIONNE LA MACHINE A VAPEUR, LA POMPE ASPIRANTE ET FOULANTE, LA PRES-SION ATMOSPHERIQUE, LE PRINCIPE D'ARCHI-MEDE, LES ECLUSES, LE MOTEUR A EXPLOSION (LEVERS, HOW A STEAM ENGINE WORKS, THE SUCTION PUMP AND FORCE PUMP, ATMOS-PHERIC PRESSURE, THE PRINCIPLE OF ARCHI-MEDES, THE INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE). After LA MER (THE SEA), (1929), which was his first attempt, with his IDÉE D'UNE CARTE (IDEA OF A MAP), (1931) he reached in one stride the very principles of «teaching by film». Going up in a captive balloon he shows the gradual simplification of the contours and details of the ground, and demonstrates the validity of the conventional map symbols; the diagram is substituted at intervals for the actual view and makes the demonstration perfectly clear and concise.

In the same way the animated diagram is an essential element in that surprising specialist craftsman M. B. M. Belin's film on the FORMATION DE L'IMAGE DANS LE MICROSCOPE (FORMATION OF THE IMAGE IN THE MICROSCOPE), based on Abbe's theory; it finds a necessary place also in the medico-surgical films of Professors Cosset, Leon Bernard, Roger Leroux, or those more recent and very remarkable ones of Prof. de Seze and Jacques Schiltz: LE RHUMATISME ET TRAITE-MENT CHIRURGICAL DE LA SCIATIQUE (RHEUMATISM AND SURGICAL TREATMENT OF SCIATICA), (Gold Medal in the Surgical Section at the Venice Festival 1948); and again in those which make up the brilliant series produced in Italy by Sign. Francesco Passinetti at the Faculty of Medicine of Bologna.

We should like to single out also the recent very remarkable technical instruction film LA FRAISEUSE UNI-VERSELLE (THE UNIVERSAL COUNTERSINKER), which shows a high technical perfection and an assured instructional method. One part of the film explains the «filmic and technological» conception of the directional head which is the essential characteristic of this machine. The explanatory figures are developed within an imaginary sphere, offering a splendid demonstration in spatial geometry; a range of gray shades, shading the figures, allows the differentiation of one from another. Every movement of the machine, every detail of its operation, is then analysed diagrammatically and related to the machine itself. Made in French, Spanish and English versions, the film met with a lively success in the recent International Congress of Applied Mechanics at London and during various meetings in Paris.

It should be observed, however, that the essential thing in film is the moving image and not the illustration of the spoken or written word. But these films, narrowly bound by teaching requirements, recognise the talk to be more important than the visual element. Whether it is incorporated in the film itself or introduced by subtitles, explanations or the insertion of blocks of text, or even by the teacher's running commentary during projection, it is the word that is the principal thing in school; the visual is only the accompaniment, the illustration.

Documentary films in animated diagrams — the example of «In Three Minutes».

In the production of documentary films, information films and films aiming at the spreading of general information, we shall find examples of a freer use of the animated diagram. Being fully aware of its autonomous character as a means of expression, we shall see it escaping from the limitations of speech and establishing itself as a language.

Because they have so often applauded them, all habitual patrons of the cinema remember the «In Three Minutes» series of shorts. Devoted to certain major problems of present happenings and of social education, they aim to strike the rather volatile mind of the cinema-going public and to attract its imagination towards a number of simple and worthwhile notions. In these films speech is introduced only at intervals to underline some lacunae in the sequences. They are not the sort of «documentaries» that seem to turn the pages of a picture postcard album at the bidding of some speaker's continuous monologue. The films we now have in mind represent the effective transition to what we may call the cinegraphic; in them the picture or visual is the medium of expression. Amongst them we may note L'ARABIE ET L'ISLAM (ARABIA AND IS-LAM), LA QUESTION DU PACIFIQUE (THE QUES-TION OF THE PACIFIC), completed by REGARDS SUR L'ASIE (LOOKING AT ASIA), LES FRONTIE-RES DE L'ALLEMAGNE (THE FRONTIERS OF GERMANY), LE PARACHUTE (THE PARACHUTE), LE VOL A VOILE (SAIL-PLANING), LE DISCOBOLE (THE DISCOBOLUS), LE TÉLÉPHONE AUTO-MATIQUE (THE AUTOMATIC TELEPHONE), LA TRANSFUSION SANGUINE (BLOOD TRANSFU-

The idea of this series of films was inspired in the minds of its originators — principally M. Etienne Lallier — by the desire to bring out the pure forms of film expression. But these pure forms could not but tend towards very individual preciosities like Bunnel's surrealist allegories, or Fischinger's interplays of circles and sticks. Therefore, they developed the idea of using this medium of expression

to expound problems of general interest, wide problems in politics or history, or various questions with a bearing on present-day life.

There is no fixed general method for the production of these films; the process of visual presentation appropriate to each case has to be worked out. The method most frequently adopted is that of «uncovering»; the figures, traced in white on a black background and at first hidden under a mask, are uncovered in a prearranged rhythm. For example, if the outline of a circumference has to be completed on the screen in twenty pictures, it is divided into twenty equal parts and the mask moves on a slide or round a pivot to reveal the visuals in succession. This movement requires great exactness; it must be effected without jerks and with absolute regularity. The various points of the lighting are fixed according to a predetermined rhythm; each image, every two images.... For tracking effects the lighting is continuous and the shots are taken at the normal speed of twenty-four frames.

The more complicated pictures involve several animations which are finally superimposed one upon another but to make sure of truly finished results, each movement or uncovering has to be animated separately without the expedient of simultaneous animation effected by synchronisation. Some of the films here noted involved up to six animations made separately and married by a superimposition. That is where the skill of the technician comes in; he has to know, for example, which is the most actinic of the series to begin registering with

of the series to begin registering with...

The method can also be one of «substitution»; thus the stop mechanism of a spring can be represented by thirty drawings which are put before the lens one after the other in strict rotation; in this case the art of the cutter combines with that of the designer. Finally use can be made of flat models, really silhouettes in two dimensions, which are moved in the layout of the design.... In this respect we shall not forget Etienne Lallier's film INTERCONNEXION (INTERCOMMUNICATION) (electricity supply grid in France) showing the amazing character of the electric «point» by the superimposition of symbols of electric consumption seen as a marvellous perspective of high mountains... Lighting effects can enrich or vary the development of the theme, whether by transparency or by edge lighting, and can produce areas of light and shade on the picture or progressive illumination; Atlantic Film's DÉCOU-VERTE DU GLOBE (DISCOVERY OF THE GLOBE) is a very fine example of this.

The animated technical diagram is made in certain Paris studios with a perfection rarely surpassed and seldom even equalled. Such are the Atlantic Film Studio, the one belonging to M. Motard, a regular collaborator of M. Marc Cantagrel's and that of M. Sarrade in the Eclair Laboratories..... Shifting of mobile visuals, simultaneous movements, developments of geometric figures, symbols and sketches, both fixed and animated, traced on the screen, direct pictures replacing or being superimposed on the figures; line drawings, stippling, hatchings or half-tones which appear, are shaded in or erased, all are produced by these specialists with perfect finish; the continuity is maintained always regular, flexible and smooth.

But the most beautiful and successful of the «In Three Minutes» series are undoubtedly the astronomy films Un TOUR DANS LA LUNE (A TOUR OF THE MOON), LE SYSTEME SOLAIRE (THE SOLAR SYSTEM), LES SAISONS (THE SEASONS). Although based on the surest data of observation, a sort of fantasy runs through

them. To explain or make appreciable the great hypotheses of science, the stars are set in motion, draw together or move away from one another in arbitrary fashion. The natural order of speeds obeys a new rhythm, the strict mechanics of the heavens, changing their ordinary laws bow, for a moment to the will of the film-maker, as to an allpowerful demiurge, whose recorded voice declares the wonder he is producing. The better to explain certain apparent effects, the earth is seen standing still and the sun swings round it. Or else the successive ellipses formed by the path of the sun are inscribed upon the dark sky of the screen to explain its apparent variation of height during the passage of the seasons. Or again the earth and the moon are shown travelling their orbits and turning on their axes; they appear in their relative sizes and the movement which carries them along is accelerated thirty thousand times. Then, at a magic sign, they move away towards the remotenesses of space. The screen shows a clear sky besprink led with stars, like the beautiful summer sky. The sun rises, enormous and quite near, from the edge of the screen; it withdraws, followed by its cortege of planets; each star appears in turn and takes its proper place, so that at a glance we can take in the whole galaxy This series of demonstrations, which ranks amongst the most wonderful successes of the screen, guarantees the reputation of the «Three Minutes» films and of Marcel de Hubsch, and has set its author amongst the foremost creators of filmic art.

We must also make mention of the four films produced by Mlle Bernson and Atlantic Films for the Planetarium of the Paris Exhibition (1937) — animated figures which form a commentary on the essential notions of pratical astronomy. One of them shows how the circular trajectory of a star appears in the form of rings drawn in the sky; the second and third show how the aspect of the heavens varies with the latitude; the fourth explains why the sun seems to change its place in the sky during the various seasons.

We must not forget, either, M. Jean Painlevé's films in which animated drawings and flat models (fixed or variable in shape) are brought together to produce some surprising and bold demonstrations: LA QUATRIEME DIMENSION (THE FOURTH DIMENSION) and DE LA SIMILITUDE DES LONGUEURS ET DES VI-TESSES (REPRESENTATIONS OF DISTANCES AND SPEEDS), produced from the scenarios of M. de Saints-Lague, Professor of Mathematics, and LE VOYAGE DANS LE CIEL (VOYAGE IN THE SKY), with M. Dufour. This last film, truly magisterial in its production, shows with surprising effects of relief and perspective the solar system in its entirety; you see Venus with its burnt-up landscapes; the Moon in an ever-dark sky; astounding views of night on Uranus with its four moons, and Saturn whose surface is still molten, encircled by its triple rings, formed of a mass of lucent particles, and companioned by its nine moons... Then the camera, pushing towards the farthest confines of the universe, traverses the Milky Way amongst an immense multitude of stars, each one animated to a determined speed. The making of this sequence is extremely remarkable; the effect is obtained by means of a series of sheets of black glass strewn with white points withdrawn one by one before the camera which thus seems to penetrate into the mass of stars.

Here the animated drawing assumes its full power as an original and new means of expression, drawing its forms and its canons out of itself, and in it the possibilities of action can be quite exceptional. In such productions the cinematographer no longer confines himself to the date of reality; he creates entirely the elements of his compositions, gives life to the imaginary by an act of interpretation or creation. Beginning with the elements and data offered by reality, he transposes, re-creates, elaborates his drawings, figurative signs and symbolic representations — true ideograms deriving from cinematographic movement the greater part of their value as means of expression. The film-maker working as a creative artist, with the imagination and temperament of such a one, gives nobility to the film and raises this technique to the dignity of an art.

If, in teaching films, the sketches, diagrams and figures do no more than suggest ideas developed by oral or recorded commentary, in the case of the animated diagram documentaries, on the contrary, the author finds complete independence and freedom; the only limits he has to recognise are those of his own technical ability and his richness of imagination and invention in the actual production of the various movements and operations. Where imagination plays so large a part, poetry will be found as well.

The animated diagram should become aware of the infinite variety of its resources. Such films, at any rate in the most finished examples we so far possess, limit the role of speech; the visual and cine-movement hold the mastery. But all means of expression contribute to the complete effectiveness of the visual — forewords, titles (themselves animated), brief spoken commentary, and above all music and sound which can produce helpful effects of synchronisation. In seeing such films one savours the higher intellectual delight that comes from order, balance and rhythm. After seeing LA LETTRE (THE LETTER), made with the collaboration of M. Charles Peignot, director of the celebrated type-foundry, of M. Mallon, archivist and paleographist, of Etienne Lallier with the Atlantic Film unit, and of Jean Wiener, the musician; after seeing LES DETTES DE GUERRE (WAR DEBTS), and astonishing jugglery of millions upon millions of money — francs, dollars, pounds and marks - made from a true scenario drawn from the Treaty of Versailles, the Spa agreements and the Dawes and Young plans; after seeing the astronomy films already mentioned, or a film like the one that relates LA BATAILLE NAVALE DU JUTLAND (THE NAVAL BATTLE OF JUTLAND), in animated drawings, one is justified in extending to the diagram film an observation of Paul Valéry, marking the appearance, side by side with the ancient means of thought - expression which we retain scarcely added to as a heritage of primitive man (words, writing, miming, music), of a new form, of a new language, the universal language of the engineer — the diagram and the graph, whereof the conventional signs, the curves of exactly determined variations, are perfectly legible and clear

The animated diagram, thus understood and used, offers one of the most fruitful kinds of development for the cinematograph, one of the future applications of the art of the screen. Just as much as any other language, the animated diagram, joined to the media and devices of suggestion by picture and sound, is capable of satisfying the intelligence and exciting the imagination. It can relate events, express ideas, make clear and compelling the most complex notions which occupy the modern wind. It offers a method of giving tangible form to scientific theories, of explaining their application as well as the great hypotheses, even to the most subtle abstractions of the science of numbers. It opens up the realm of the abstract and of the unreal in every domain of nature.

TOWARDS THE CINEMA IN RELIEF

A DUTCH INVENTION

After researches lasting 20 years Dr. F. H. Reynders, a Dutch physician from the village of Schipluiden-bij-Delft, has succeeded in constructing a camera capable of reproducing a stereoscopic image on the screen giving the illusion of three dimensions without the distortions or comical or frightening effects that have been hitherto inseparable from films in relief.

The stereoscopic films that we have seen up to now have had the disadvantage of giving the spectator the impression that the object on the screen was advancing towards him.

The invention of the Dutch doctor keeps the image within the screen, at the same time maintaining the natural depth proper to three dimensions. To the spectator the screen seems to be a window at the opening of which he stands watching whatever passes within.

While Officer of Health in 1920, the inventor was charged with the examination of candidates for air-pilots' licences. He discovered that certain pilots were less precise than others in their estimation of distance. His researches into the cause of this disparity revealed that it lay in the stereoscopic element of the view of the pilot.

Having become a country doctor he continued his study of this question and reached the conclusion that the system prevailing at that time in the manufacture of stereoscopic film was erroneous. It was generally accepted that for the camera angles of these films the distance between the two lenses of the camera had to be identical to that which separated the human eyes. Dr. Reynders proved that this is only true for one determined distance.

With the technical and financial assistance of F. A. Weber, an engineer, he constructed a double camera with synchronised movements, a camera whose distance between the lenses augmented or diminished according as the object to be filmed approached or retreated. In front of one of the lenses was a filter so adjusted that it admitted only horizontal light vibrations, and in front of the other lense, a filter which admitted only vertical light vibrations. The positives obtained from these two films were projected superimposed on one screen. By keeping two lunettes accurately polarised the images produced on the screen were perfectly stereoscopic.

During the German Occupation, this invention, though kept strictly secret, was patented under the

name of «Veri-Vision-System». After the German capitulation, the patent was secured in other countries also.

When the projection is made on a screen constructed on the «grille» system, (based on a French invention, this screen is called a «Russian screen») the use of the polarised lunettes is not necessary. The «Russian Screen» presents one grave difficulty: the film can be seen stereoscopically only in one part of the hall and in order to obtain a perfectly stereoscopic result one needs to be so placed that one's eyes receive accurately, the one the vertical, the other the horizontal light vibrations. Slight movement to one side or the other destroys this indispensable position and one sees but a vague and flat image.

Dr. Reynders and the engineer Weber, felt certain that they could discover a way of freeing the Russian screen from this inconvenience. To arrive at this conclusion, however, meant giving themselves up to a great deal of research which made it necessary to seek a subsidy from the Ministry of Instruction in Arts and Sciences.

For stereoscopic projection, two projectors with synchronised movement are needed. However, this difficulty is easily overcome. When, for example, the two camera angles are produced on 16mm film, one can print them on a normal film and use an ordinary projector in a cinema. It is sufficient to attach to it a small appendage consisting of a prism which assures the superposition of the two projected images.

The Veri-Vision films which we have seen include, among others, monochrome and coloured shots of sporting events. The most satisfactory results were those from coloured films taken at the celebrations of the crowning of Queen Juliana of Holland. However, the system is none the less revolutionary in monochrome.

The «stereofilm naturel» will considerably improve visual observation as much from the point of view of the military as from that of industrial, scientific and publicity purposes. The images are much more lively.

Film criticism is less enthusiastic with regard to this new invention. However, there is a good chance that it will revive the development of film as a modern art; it will prove to be another stage from the original fun-fair diversion to the complete art of film.

J. T.

WORLD PANORAMA

BY OUR PERMANENT EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENTS

BELGIUM

Position of French Film

With more than 700 films a year spread among a hundred distributing centres Belgium is certainly one of the greatest film consumers. The United States has the largest share of this distribution with 80% — a figure which rises to more than 90% in certain Flemish regions of the country.

What of the position of French films?

The lists cited show that this situation is hardly brilliant though in certain districts — notably Namur — French films account for 40% of the programmes. It is none the less true that the French cinema too often makes a poor showing.

The first, though not the principal reason for this state of things is certainly the lack of sustained publicity. French films and artists are hardly known. The new films, even the most important ones, are released without any warning, though the general public usually has at least a season's preliminary advance publicity in the case of American films — even secondary films.

It has been suggested to French producers to organise publicity in common with foreign films but so far nothing has been done.

It has to be remembered that there are two language groups in the country. The great majority of the population is Flemish but not all the Flemings are bilingual. For them French films are foreign films as much as British or American. Evidently the situation is different in the French-speaking sector — the Walloons naturally want to hear films in their own tongue. There is also a predominence of dubbed films.

Flemings outside the large towns all, more or less, prefer the original versions of films. In Brussels the great American Premières are held in the original version.

The principal cause of the public dissatisfaction with French films has to do with the general character of the French cinema. Two French film critics, René Jeanne and Charles Ford, have both indicated this in an interview which they recently gave to a Flemish journalist on the occasion of their journey to Anvers. They both declared that French productions had the Parisian public too much in mind and took insufficient account of the outlook of the provincial public.

This consideration is even more legitimate in Belgium. If it is true that Brussels absorbs nearly all the French productions, it is not the same in the provinces. Our public refused «DÉDÉE D'ANVERS», «MACADAM», «LE DIABLE AU CORPS», «UNE FEMME PAR JOUR» etc. and other films even less grave. At Anvers the few cinemas which show exclusively French films have a bad reputation and are scarcely ever frequented by Catholics who represent the majority of the Flemish population.

At several places the corporative bodies have drawn attention to this aspect of the question. The diffusion of French films is not merely a question of publicity. The French cinema in its present expression has never known a large distribution — and it will need more than a great publicity drive to change the situation as it is. As there is no censorship in Belgium the field is open and absolutely free: if the French cinema does not enter it is because it is not wanted. An unwhole-some character makes its introduction into the country impossible.

Unfortunately, it is a fact that even the decent film has difficulty in making itself felt. It suffers in the first place from the general indifference towards the French cinema. In the second place the methods of exploitation make it practically impossible to rent an isolated film and therefore render the possibility of distribution more difficult. The exhibitor taking a series of French films is certain to offend his public with at least half the films he offers them. Therefore he prefers not to take them!

The solution is to be found in France not in Belgium. It is not the methods of exploitation that need to be changed. It is the French cinema itself which must change if it wishes to occupy in Belgium the position to which it considers it has a right.

Leo Lunders

CHILE

An outstanding Picture

The public of Santiago, Chile, is getting so used to the atmosphere of Psycho-Pathological pictures that it is looking upon the promoters of new films with a justified mistrust. The spectator who sinks into a comfortable seat with the hope of spending two en-

joyable hours, will probably not be satisfied if he supposes a priori that the heroine of the film is a dangerous paranoic, or if he fancies that the hero is suffering from amnesia and that he has committed half-a-dozen crimes during these mental pranks.

It is a really agreeable surprise to meet — in the midst of this psychiatric epidemic from which the cinema is suffering — a film in which nobody loses either free will or morality; a film in which the performers act without morbid impulsion or freudian complex, and whose thesis produces trust in a normal, intelligent, generous humanity.

We have already been saturated, I should even say intoxicated, by so many mental anomalies, by so many and frequent diversions of personalities, where good and evil appear like inevitable elements of human conduct, like a fatal inconsistency that deserves neither reward nor punishment. There is missing a sentimental film in which people would behave like reasonable beings, conscious of their errors and weaknesses, capable of overcoming egoism and of seeking the interest of others in their actions. We need a film in which maternal love, without any pathological jealousy, and the conjugal union without criminal excess, are presented. We would like to see the heroes praying at the seasonable moment, and the heavenly answer coming down from a Father who watches over his unhappy children.

This extraordinary film, the absence of which has been deplored, has reached us, at last; it fills the moral emptiness among the public, caused by the other productions. The title: «IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE», harmonizes perfectly with the thesis which, through a simple story and without any straining after effects, upholds the essentially catholic teaching: the man who sacrifices himself for his neighbour, discovers the full beauty of life, and, perhaps, is assured, of the help of God and his fellow-men when he is in difficulty.

It may be feared that such a serious thesis might prove to be excessive. But this is not the case. The dangers have been avoided in a marvellous way, and the humorous elements intelligently distributed. The personage embodying these lofty principles has been presented first as a child and then as an adult, unaware of his optimism and generosity, ready to give up his ambitions without regretting too much what he could not obtain: for instance he was unable to dance the Charleston in the middle of a swimmingpool. This gives an agreeable note to the routine of a popular feast. Friends pass by, and on a Christmas night this «man of good will», does not find the promised peace on earth. Then, he feels the whole weight of his failure and wants to put an end to his life, which seems useless to him. Various anxious voices are heard: the mother's, the wife's, the children's; friends pray for him, and God's help comes quickly. Suddenly, an angel, taking the form of a man, old and fond of good living, appears to him. The mysterious messenger offers his help. He looks like a cherub, painted by Murillo, who has grown old; but he is a North-American angel who amuses himself at devouring Tom Sawyer's Adventures. The messenger fulfils his mission marvellously well. He knows how to prevent his protégé from committing suicide, by giving him, once again, the opportunity of forgetting himself by saving the life of another. Afterwards he succeeds in curing him entirely of his regret at being born, showing him what would have happened in his town, in his family and among his friends, had he not been born. From this excursion into «nonexistence», our man will deduce deep truths. Now he knows that the magnificent and unforgettable treasure of life, does not belong to him exclusively, but that, being a perfect work of the Creator, he is closely associated with the existence of a hundred others, whose fate would have been spoiled or broken without the fact, apparently insignificant, of his own passage into the world.

If the man who thought he was a failure on that Christmas night, discovers the worth and beauty of life, he will delightedly resume his responsibilities, his preoccupations, and even the care of his financial ruin which had pushed him to the edge of suicide. His return from «nothingness» brings him, besides divine help, human consolation by the gratitude that manifests itself not only through the timely delivery of material goods, but also, that «treasure» which is never bought and which is never reached by criminals, the «treasure» that he had hoarded up without knowing it, in the hearts of his friends.

Like the personage of the film, the public who attends the projection of this work remembers numerous truths generally forgotten in the cinematographic scenarios. Those who see this film will also perceive that beauty — in art as well as in life — does not give full satisfaction, unless there are eternal principles of the christian dogma at the basis.

Valentina Maidagan de Ugarte

COLUMBIA

The Hierarchy has vigorously reacted against the Immorality of certain films.

Among the Catholics in Columbia the second half of the year 1948 was characterized by a fruitful campaign launched by the Bishops against immoral cinema. The publications and the organisations of Catholic Action had initiated several years ago similar campaigns, but the movement bore a regional or local character and therefore lacked unity and national weight.

The latest Assembly of the Columbian Episcopate convoked at Bogota at the end of June formulated categoric decisions on the problem of immoral cinema. Inspired by the encyclical «Vigilanti Cura» of His Holiness Pope Pius XI, the Columbian Hierarchy declared that the cinema should not be a factor of

evil, but rather an instrument for good and truth. Therefore Catholics are bound in conscience not to attend films which induce violation of moral law, nor should they sympathize with concerns that speculate with such a violation. The Catholic Press should not publicise immoral films. A Legion of Decency similar to that which runs in the United States is to be organised in every parish. All these organisations with the Prelates as their leaders must press the Columbian Government to create a National Committee of Censors (for there exists no Government Censorship of any kind in Columbia). This Committee of Censors will examine the films on their entry into the country and forbid the import of films which are prejudicial to morals and ethics. It is, moreover, necessary to arouse the members of the American Episcopate to urge film producing firms to abstain from making films detrimental to the Catholic religion, to morals and ethics.

In deciding «to launch a national campaign against bad cinema from the pulpit and the confessional, through the press and the radio» the Columbian Bishops declare: «We condemn as bad films those which pander to vices and sin against any of the Ten Commandments, those which turn to ridicule the dogmas and moral doctrine of the Church and its ministers, and those which exhibit immodest and lewd scenes.»

In conjunction with the decisions of the Episcopal Conference Mgr. Ismael Perdomo, Archbishop of Bogota and Primate of Columbia, issued last October a circular to the secular and regular clergy of the Archdiocese of Bogota ruling that «A Legion of Christian Decency will be set up in all the parishes, churches and colleges of our Archdiocese on the last Sunday of October, feast of Christ the King.» The necessary indications will be given on the preceding Sundays. The Parish Priests will ask the faithful not to attend films classified as «bad» and will recommend to them to say mentally the following prayer «O Sacred Heart of Jesus, King of Columbia, in acknowledgement of Thy domain over us, in compliance with the precepts of Thy Gospel and the Teachings of Thy Church, we promise Thee not to see bad films.» The circular gives the following definition of the Legion of Decency: «The Legion of Decency so much recommended by His Holiness Pope Pius XI in his Encyclical «Vigilanti Cura» on the cinema, and which has produced marvellous effects on the moral tone of the cinema in those countries where it has been established, is the union of all Catholics in a common promise not to attend films classified by the Legion as «bad». The letter adds that this promise entails the necessity of keeping the faithful cognisant of the films that have been condemned by the Legion of Decency, by publishing on Church notices lists of proscribed films. Though the promise relates to prohibited films only, the campaign must also be extended to those films listed as

«dangerous», from which the faithful are to be urged to keep away since such films furnish a dangerous occasion of sin.

The organisation of the Legion is incumbent on a Committee consisting of a priest and several eminent members of the laity, both male and female. Catholic Action will co-operate with the Legion of Decency; for some years it has published a weekly review called «Cine y Libros» (Cinema and Books) where films and books are classified from a moral standpoint, and advice and directions given on the subjects in question. A group of censors attends the «première» shows of the films and afterwards gives its recommendations on their moral tone. These recommendations are published in the review «Cine y Libros», fixed to Church doors, repeated from pulpits and spread by the members of the League.

The success of this important and responsible work entails much care and prudence. In the other dioceses of the country the Bishops are considering similar movements, keeping in touch with the functioning of the League in the United States and in other countries, are carefully forming leaders and studying the composition of the censorship system which is the indispensable basis for obtaining good results.

One of the decisions taken by the first National Congress of Forensic Law convened at Bogota for the inauguration of the National Institute of Forensic Law was the struggle against immoral films. (Other important resolutions passed were: a Campaign against criminal abortion and birth prevention, an appeal to the press and to the radio to stop spreading passionate and criminal stories that are liable to predispose people to vice and crime.)

«It is necessary to have the cinema controlled» urges the Congress of Forensic Law, «in order to avoid the showing of utterly pornographic films that kad to the corruption of morals or to crime against society or against the life of its members by their too realistic shows. It behoves on the contrary to stimulate instructive, entertaining and moralizing films.»

This declaration from the Congress of Forensic Law which comprised about a hundred eminent doctors from all over the country was held some weeks after the Columbian Bishops had launched their campaign against immoral films.

Enrique Santos, Chief Editor of the paper «El Tiempo» strongly attacked, under the pen-name of Caliban, the film «FOREVER AMBER», which had been condemned by the Legion of Decency in the United States for its gross immorality and which was, nevertheless, authorized for adults by the committee of municipal censorship for Bogota. Caliban argues thus: «Morphia, heroine, maribuana and opium are banned. Why then should there be any forbearance for this poison which is incapable of being erased once it has penetrated the young mind.»

The pressman then attacks the official censors whose mental laxity tolerates any sort of indecorum». And he adds «The evil caused by the entry of films approved without any deliberation, in conformity with the principles of complete liberty is already widespread. There remains but one remedy: that the families still abiding by moral traditions boycott films of the type of «FOREVER AMBER»! It is nobody's business to interest the general public in topics which constitute the study matter in a clinic.»

The above mentioned film was advertised in Bogota for the beginning of January. It must be borne in mind that the Legion of Decency in the United States drove its producers to make notable changes in the film. They agreed to these changes to avert the economic losses they might have suffered had the film been classified as «condemned».

Monsignor Joaquin Garcia, Archbishop of Medillin, forbade Catholics to see the film «EL ORIGEN DE LA NATALIDAD» (U.S.A.) and «PECADO Y CRIMEN SEXUAL» (Argentina) because of the erroneous views they end to create on the problem of sex. Mgr. Ismael Perdomo, Archbishop of Bogota proscribed the film «PECADO Y CRIMEN SEXUAL» under pain of mortal sin. The cinema theatre which was showing it hastened to have it withdrawn from its programme and all other cinemas did the same.

In his message to the faithful, the Archbishop of Medellin recommended them: «Do not frequent these shows where there is a grave danger for your souls, since such performance supply an outrage on Faith, on morality and ethics.»

The Catholic Action of Medellin stated in the columns of its press that such films were «seriously prejudicial and conducive to sin, for under the pretext of initiating youth into the mysteries of biology they risk leading them towards perdition.» It adds: «Moralists and pedagogues teach that although sexual ignorance may result in sin, a premature knowledge of sexual matters is often provocative of sin. Such is the advice of the Holy See to Christian teachers.»

These two films pretend, for different reasons and through different ways, that ignorance constitutes the only cause of all the evil that occurs in the sphere of sex; and such a peril could be averted by exhibiting all such dangers to the view of children and young people. The film offers incidents and details altogether inadmissible and repugnant, which, together with its erroneous thesis, oblige the Catholic conscience to condemn outright such a show.

The writer of these lines avails himself of this opportunity to show the fallacy of these films, from an article published in the paper «El Colombiano» of Medellin. Here is an extract: «The Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Education attributes errors in ethics not so much to intellectual ignorance, but rather to a will too weak and exposed to occasions of sin, without being supported by Grace. If it were

true that intellectual ignorance were the only cause, then it might be concluded that the individual versed in such matters is invariably chaste and the ignorant unchaste! Sexual instruction and education ought to be imparted, when necessary, individually and at the right moment with all due precautions of traditional Christian education, and by persons who are called by God to instruct, and enjoy therefore grace of state.»

In a further rejoinder it was stated: «To the system of terror which is being extolled by some prophylactic institutes... by films, pamphlets and reviews, we Catholics oppose a system of Christian love, of virtue, continency, sacrifice, of chastity that will save the soul, fortify it, and dignify it.

The Bishop of Barranquilla also informed the clergy and faithful of the danger which these two films present.

On the other hand Mayor Calealde of Medellin prohibited the showing of the French film «LE DIABLE AU CORPS (El Diablo y la Dama) because of its scandalous immorality.

José Lopez Henao

SPAIN

General survey of the cinema in Spain

The Spanish Film Industry is for most people like so many other things concerning Spain, an unknown world. The individual Spaniard has an artistic temperament in which the theatrical and romantic predominates but the sense of the mediaeval in his literature is so deep rooted that it stands to reason that the introduction among the Arts of such a recent invention as the Cinema is bound to be slow, in any case slower than in countries such as the United States where it has developed so spontaneously and has, as it were, become part of its culture. Nevertheless, the Spanish Film Industry has developed considerably, especially since the Civil War. Before 1936 film production was largely a matter of isolated enterprise and mostly unplanned. To-day these defects are being eliminated and the recently formed Cinematographical Experiment and Publicity Trust under Government control are giving instructional courses in Production, scriptwriting, Direction, Acting, Acoustics, optics and camera, all under the direction of veteran experts (mostly Hollywood trained).

Every effort is being used to stimulate the improvements in technique, artistry and culture and this is done mostly through competitions and prizes offered for the best films. Nearly all the studios contain the most modern equipment comparable to the best in Europe. In these since 1939 nearly 400 full size and 2,000 documentary films have been made. Among the most celebrated and artistic are: «RAZA», «EL ESCANDALO», «LA REINA SANTA», «LOS ULTIMOS DE FILIPINAS», «INES DE CASTRO»,

«DON QUICHOTTE», «LOCURA DE AMOR», «LA PRINCESSE DE LOS URSINOS». Many of these have won international prizes, the most recent being those at the Hispano-American Congress.

Two important films now in the making are «LA MIES ES MUCHA» about early Spanish Catholic Missionaries and another film about the life of

St. Ignatius of Loyola.

The Spaniards are now amazingly film minded and statistics show they are one of the most cinematographical people in the world who show great discernment and intelligence as well as being highly critical. Throughout Spain there are some 4,000 cinemas including (for Madrid and Barcelona) some of the finest and most sumptuously fitted in the world. To satisfy this great public demand about 400 films are needed each year. As this is impossible for Spanish studios alone outside help is enlisted mostly from the United States. Many American firms such as Metro, Paramount, Warner etc. etc. are established and distributed regularly.

The Spaniards show a special fondness for Hispano-American films and Mexican productions have been remarkably successful. Italian films are now becoming popular and recently compiled statistics show that 55 American, 14 Mexican, 9 Italian, 7 French, 5 Argentine, 4 English, 4 Swedish as well as 4 German films have recently been shown.

Many American films get their first showing on Spanish screens before they go to the rest of Europe. During this period 15 Spanish films have been shown, the most celebrated being the «FOLLY OF LOVE» which had such a long run in Madrid and was comparable in popularity to the «SONG OF BERNA-DETTE» and «GOING MY WAY» (Siguiendo mi Camino). The natural favourites are, however, those productions taken from Spanish Literature, both novels and plays. «THE FOLLY OF LOVE» is really the film version of Tamago y Berras; a novel with an historical basis. «DON QUIJOTE DE LA MANCHA» from the pen of the immortal Cervantes made its debut on the screen last year. Another «THE WATERS RUN DEEP» was based on the novel by Palacio Valdés, and last to be produced «OUR SEA» (Mare Nostrum) from the popular novel by Blasco Ibánez.

Lastly, it is interesting to note that in Spain the films have always kept high moral standards. The State understands its duties to a nation essentially Catholic and the Board of Censors are in complete collaboration with the representatives of the Catholic Church. Everything is censored before the film is made and thus complete control is achieved and classifications are made both for adults and children. Stories and scenes contrary to Dogma and public morals are banned or corrected but outside of this the Producer is left full scope. Thanks to a healthy direction and clear sighted censorship these films lose nothing of their force and showmanship and defects,

if there are any, are only as to the form. Thus the Spaniards have obtained a clean screen much to the satisfaction of the public and the censorship is completely understood and approved especially as it is applied to foreign productions as well.

José María Cano

FRANCE

Recent French Production

Parisians have had little opportunity of seeing new French films during the first months of the year. For financial reasons which remain obscure all the big Paris cinemas have been booked up with American films, most of which have been mediocre offerings enjoying only a limited success, whereas many impatiently awaited French films have been unable to obtain a Paris showing. Contrary to the general custom, several of these films have long since been shown in the provinces, and the Paris critics impatiently await an opportunity to get to work on them.

A case in point is Maurice Cloche's «LAENNEC», which we discussed in our last issue, and which has met with a very favourable reception in the provinces. It would appear that Maurice Cloche has succeeded, with «MONSIEUR VINCENT» and «LAENNEC», in arousing the interest of an intelligent public which eagerly seeks for works of high inspiration, and has hitherto cold-shouldered the cinema. With «HAM-LET», Laurence Olivier has consolidated the position that «HENRY V» won for him amongst that section of the public which never misses a stage presentation of Shakespeare and usually finds current film production disappointing. To the French, Shakespeare is difficult of access, but Olivier's perfection of form and classic production, together with his own superb performance, have made «HAMLET» known to large numbers of people who would never even have had the courage to attempt to read the play. This power to make great works available to new audiences is not the least amongst the cinema's virtues.

The anguished problem of post-war childhood has been spotlighted by two foreign films. Rossellini is now widely known in France, and all the new school Italian films meet with a sure success. «GERMANY ZERO YEAR» is the first of them to be devoted to a non-Italian problem. We have already seen «THE MURDERERS ARE AMONGST US», which deals with a similar subject, but Rossellini's film seems to contain a deeper truth, doubtless because he sets out to prove and to demonstrate. The evidence of Frenchmen returning from Germany confirms the urgency of the need for grappling with the problem of a hopeless and despairing German youth, which is so unbearably portrayed in «GERMANY ZERO YEAR», «SOMEWHERE IN EUROPE», a Hungarian film of quality, also treats the problem of youth uprooted by the war, but with this difference, that, unlike «GERMANY ZERO YEAR», it does attempt to point to a solution: at the end of the film there dawns the hope of a new life for the homeless children of Central Europe, in a youth organisation especially created to meet the need. As always, we are less convinced by the situation leading to suicide in «GERMANY ZERO YEAR», than by a film like «SOMEWHERE IN EUROPE» which does allow us to hope. It is easier to picture a state of hopelessness than to portray constructive enthusiasm.

Amusing films are few and far between, and for this reason we must note the first appearance in France of the Italian comedian Macario in «COURE E PERSI LA GUERA». That a film so utterly free from national and military prejudices could have been made so soon after the war by one of the protagonists is astonishing. Macario does not enjoy war, but his acceptance of it is quite without bitterness. The comic element springs from the things that happen to this good-natured, permanent conscript. And if events force Macario to don Italian, American and German uniform in succession, it is never through his own choice. Such terrible humour, born of the idiotic situation of the little man who is conscripted to serve a cause which he does not in the least understand, has not been seen since «SHOULDER ARMS».

In the domain of comedy, France follows the Hollywood debunking activities of Preston Sturges with growing interest. «THE MIRACLE OF MORGAN'S CREEK» is a lighthearted film and its humour is not addressed to children. Its aim, after all, is not so very far removed from that of «COURO E PERSI LA GUERA» and it never seems to confuse ridicule of social hypocrisies and conventions (objects of attack in all comedy) with a disregard for moral principles.

I have said that Paris has seen few French films. Those that there are should be treated with reserve. The theme of «UNE SI JOLIE PETITE PLAGE», skifully directed by Allegret, is the regrettable story of an adolescent who is seduced by a singer and reduced to despair by her death. We are not shown his adventurés: we guess them as we watch him live his last days against the desolate, rain-swept background of a watering-place in winter. All the characters seem hopelessly crushed by a fatal despair and there is not even the suggestion that it might be conquered by will-power: such wrecks of humanity do, of course, exist, but the world is not made up solely of wrecks. In «JEAN DE LA LUNE», which was a successful stage play at one of the boulevard theatres and was also made into a film in the thirties; feminine faithlessness is the theme. Brainless wife, complaisant husband, lives filled with futilities, meaningless smiles and empty tenderness: the public has always enjoyed such shallow tales of unprincipled lives.

G. H. Clouzot's «MANON» is an altogether more important work, even though the subject of L'His-

toire de Manon Lescaut, typical 18th century novel, is not so very different from that of «JEAN DE LA LUNE»: the passionate attraction of a man to a woman in spite of betrayals and humiliations, and almost because of them. G. H. Clouzot has made few films, but he is recognised as one of the ablest French directors: «MANON» affords confirmation of the perfection of a style both sober and clear and possessing at the same time a firmness and precision which make nonsense of the usual pictured chatterings. The film's very seriousness gives it an almost intolerably harsh atmosphere, and, if the licentiousness of Manon and her murky background are often shocking, Clouzot shows no softness in depicting such things nor any sympathy for the often ignoble characters. On the contrary, the cruelty of the story and the harshness with which it is told never fail to give the impression that Clouzot hates and despises the characters, and that in them he despises humanity in general. This absence of affection in a world in which passion and vice reign gives the film a suffocating atmosphere, often evocative of the early works of Stroheim.

J. L. Tallenay

GREAT BRITAIN

The quarter's films in Britain

Overshadowing the cinema in Britain these days is the Crisis. Studio after studio closes down. As I passed Shepherd's Bush, the Gainsborough Studio, the other day, a long procession of technicians was forming up to walk to the Houses of Parliament to present their grievances. At the other end of the scale were the discussions then taking place at Pinewood, from which I had come that very day. There, Mr. Tom O'Brien, the General Secretary of the Cinema Trades Union, was in council with Mr. J. Arthur Rank and other film industry chiefs. It is a curious affair and one which the ordinary layman finds hard to understand. There is no lack of support for the cinema. Good films attract their queues as usual. The money goes into the Box-office and, presumably, some of it trickles back to the production bench. But where does the major portion of the £ 200 000 which, it is said, is needed for a «normal» film, go to? The attitude of the men to their work may, perhaps be illustrated by the fact that, when Mr. Sydney Box, of Gainsborough, made an emotional farewell to his workers at Shepherd's Bush the other day, the «workers» left their cameras and other equipment just where they stood. There was no attempt to oil and cover these expensive tools which the cinema craftsman needs to produce his works of art. Is this fact significant? And of what?

There have been some seventeen British films since the first issue of the INTERNATIONAL

FILM REVIEW went to press until the present article (written at the end of February). They provide a characteristic cross-section of the output of the British studios since the war. They range from the fatuous to the first-class. The proportions are, perhaps, not much different from what a comparable group from Hollywood would show. Nevertheless, the promise of good things to come provided by the wartime flowering of the British cinema is not maintained. LOOK BEFORE YOU LOVE starring Margaret Lockwood and WAR-NING TO WANTONS with Ann Vernon and Harold Warrender are the least acceptable of the bunch. The latter is notable for having been made on the Independent Frame system, which, it is claimed, saves both time and money. Alas, the saving was hardly worth while. Two films with Jack Warner and Kathleen Harrison attempt to establish a comedy series built round a lowermiddle class family. HERE COME THE HUG-GETTS and VOTE FOR HUGGETT, had a poor reception from the critics, but even though they are not serious contributions to film art they evidentally meet a certain need among suburban cinema-goers and are excellently received by the people for whom they are intended. ONCE UPON A DREAM is more successful in the comedy vein but still a little heavy-going. Googie Withers and Griffith Jones both manifest a flair for light comedy which they exploit to the limit permitted them by the poor script. HARD TO BE GOOD and ANOTHER SHORE are selfconscious efforts to make film capital out of the present unstable economic and political system. Anne Crawford and Jimmy Hanley, in the first, are successful; Robert Beatty and Moira Lister in the second are not. It is a case of miscasting as much as of poor writing, both players are talented and when given the right material, do very well.

The best of the comedy series so far is ALL OVER THE TOWN, a story dealing with local newspaper and towncouncil politics. Sarah Churchill makes her re-appearance on the British Screen and Norman Wooland, after his success as Horatio in HAMLET is here given a starring role. (One tries to forget his part with Margaret Lockwood in LOOK BEFORE YOU LOVE). The film has first-class supporting work from Cyril Cusack, Fabia Drake and James Hayter.

The most outstanding film of the period is undoubtedly SCOTT OF THE ANTARCTIC in which John Mills achieves a superlatively fine performance as the hero of the dash to the South Pole. In fact, each part is played with remarkable sensitivity and leaves one with a sense of participation in something sacred. The last scene, Oates' walk out into the snow, is treated with a little less tact than might have been hoped for, but the

profound note of Christian purpose underlying the whole conception of the film is gratifying. The music of Vaughan Williams and the photography are both outstanding and give a unity which is unusual on the screen. THE SMALL VOICE, the film which The Archers have made of Nigel Balchin's novel, is gripping and, apart from one vulgar excursion into surrealism, an artistically integral film. David Farrar and Kathleen Byron (the neurotic Sister of BLACK NARCISSUS) head a satisfactory cast but the most interesting work is done by Cyril Cusack and Michael Gough.

The British screen is well-off now-a-days for talent in the field of character actors. It is a pity that more use is not made of them while their salaries are still within the realms of what is reasonable and artistically honest.

An experiment which is being copied in other countries is to take production units to foreign locations. THE GLASS MOUNTAIN was made largely in Venice and the Dolomites and has an international cast including Valentina Cortese and Tito Gobbi as well as our own Michael Denison and Dulcie Gray. It is a pleasing and tunefully satisfying story of a composer who, as an R. A. F. pilot, is shot down into enemy territory during the war and falls among friends. His composition and his love affairs follow the usual pattern but there is about this film an air of sensitive refinement (if the term is not misunderstood) which makes it exceptional. THE PASSIONATE FRIENDS is another film which owes something to its foreign locations as well as to the power of its director, David Lean. The scenes, taken in France and Switzerland are delightful and (dare one say?) make one wish that French cameramen were as skilled with the use of light and shade as their directors and actors are with the use of verbal and physical nuance. The story, from the dialogue by H. G. Wells, on the subject of freelove, has been admirably adapted for the screen and leaves no trace of the didactic moral heresies of its author. Ann Todd, Trevor Howard and Claud Rains, are a group of players which, I think, no other country could better for this kind of picture. It makes one sigh for the days when people like David Lean and Michael Powell and Leslie Howard and Laurence Olivier were free to make first-class films because they were making them to fight for Britain.

The remainder of the season's offerings are distressingly undistinguished. Even the Wilcox-Neagle film, ELIZABETH OF LADYMEAD, is a departure from the safe formula, trite but tried, of pleasant things like SPRINGTIME in PARK LANE and PICCADILLY INCIDENT. Anna Neagle wears the dresses of four different periods and manages to look charming as well as acting

well in each of them. The Wilcox films are built on a trusted and unadventurous foundation but we can be grateful that they provide a consistent if not very culturally satisfying entertainment. EUREKA STOCKADE is another film which is built to a model. This time it is the cow-boy model, but the film is made in Australia and tells the story of the early days in the Commonwealth. The Ealing Studios have adopted «Down-under» as their happy-hunting ground and they have done well to begin to exploit the potentialities of this vast, and filmically, virgin area. But EUREKA STOCKADE is no OVERLANDERS or BUSH CHRISTMAS, even though the same players and technicians are employed. I fear that a gallant effort to break new ground has been made without counting the need for careful scripting and adequate acting ability. Some of the scenes: the fire and the unequal battle between the militia and the miners have the seeds of greatness in them, but they wage an unequal battle against lack of imagination and poetic insight such as made some part of OVERLANDERS to rank among the best things ever seen on the screen. PORTRAIT FROM LIFE in which Mai Zetterling gives a beautiful but almost unsupported performance, and a revival of ONE OF OUR AIRCRAFT IS MISSING remind us that there is still a lot of material left in the war for really thoughtful screenwriters to explore. The latter film was among the very best ever to come out of any country during the war, or indeed, before it.

Our screen lacks the magic spark of creative imagination. We are too conscious of dollar politics and high-level discussion between Cabinet Ministers and Film Magnatas to be able to be free enough to make works of art. Meanwhile, other countries show their films in our Capital and provincial cities and show us that the divine spark has not fled from the earth but is only hidden from our eyes. MONSIEUR VINCENT is creating records wherever it is shown. It has an alltime record for a Continental film in London. PAISA too, is breaking new ground after a six-month run in London. America, too, comes into the picture, as it always does and always will when it has a film worth showing. JOHNNY BELINDA has created an enormous impression. Jane Wyman with Pierre Fresnay, received an award from the Daily Express Film Tribunal which comprised members of the Arts and Letters and Film Critics Circle. Another American film in a different vein which is drawing large crowds is THE SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY with Danny Kaye. Bob Hope, too, in THE PALE FACE is having a great success.

So, in spite of the Crisis, there is no lack of real support for a good film. It is for the workers

and their representatives as well as the men who produce the films to see whether they cannot agree to give the public what it wants and is still willing to pay to see.

John A. V. Burke

JTALIE

Italian «Neo-Realism» — a sign of contradiction

When Rossellini's film «ROMA CITTA APERTA» broke the ice which had surrounded the Italian Cinema and when in less than a year, «SCIUSCIA», «QUATRO PASSI TRA LE NUVOLE», «IL BANDITO», «UN GIORNO NELLA VITA», «VIVERE IN PACE» and «PAISA» by De Sica, Blasetti, Lattuada, Blasetti, Zampa and Rossellini respectively, all came out one after the other with growing success vis à vis the Critics and the Public, French critics coined the phrase «neo-realism» for this new form of cinematic expression.

Since then it has seemed unavoidable when referring to the Italian Cinema, not to mention «neo-realism». Some malicious people, however, see in this «neo-realism», the effect of a practical necessity; the sole means of retrieving an industry, through an evasive expedient and a documentary style of shooting, by making films that cannot be produced in studios wrecked by the war.

On the other hand, staunch defenders, see in this form of expression the only authentic method of seizing and reproducing the truth of life. To both parties we reply that after five years study of «neo-realism» we see that this orientation or development born, not from an expedient, but from a sense of urgency amongst Italian film makers, is passing through a critical phase which might at any moment develop into a style or a rhetoric.

If by the term «Neo-Realism» we mean the crude reproduction of a heavy and unrelieved reality, we must realise that it is Rossellini who has reached the zenith in this field with his «GERMANIA ANNO ZERO». By comparison, films like Verzano's «IL SOLE SORGE ANCORA», Ferroni's «TOMBOLO», Lattuada's «SENZA PIETA», De Sanctis «CACCIA TRAGICA», Germi's «GIOVENTIL PERDUTTA» and Zamana's «ANNI DIE-TU PERDUTA» and Zampa's «ANNI DIF-FICCILI» are seen to be more or less deliberate imitations which, according to the director's outlook place the accent on politics, social behaviour, education, manners and customs or are simply a mixture of each.

But obviously «neo-realism» could not keep to these excessive limitations without reaching an impasse.

Some are quick to argue that reality is not only heavy and sad but is also rich in themes of hope and goodness. It was in this style of documented reality, as if discovered and reproduced by chance, that Zampa's «L'ONOREVOLE ANGELINA» and Castellani's broader example, «SOTTO IL SOLE DI ROMA» were created.

In any case the question, in essence, remains open. «Neo-realism» remains to be discovered and determined in its particularly suggestive and convincing form of reproduction on the screen, of reality, not merely reconstructed but caught in flight and authentically fixed.

It remains in other words to determine the potentialities of «neo-realism» beyond its present particular documentary form.

One realises that «neo-realism» is but a special form of expression with its photographic tone, its characters taken from life, its real backgrounds, its inarticulate story seeming to lack any pre-arranged plan; the complete absence in the dialogue of preoccupations with literary exigencies; a dialogue often improvised and relying on local dialect rather than the language as a whole. This is felt after one has seen that this point of view can be applied and has been applied with convincing results to films completely different from the traditional «neo-realist» films.

In connection, for instance, with Viscontii's «LA TERRA TREMA» one can apply to it the term used to describe the Italian romantic school in literature at the end of the last century and talk about «neo-truth» in the sense of a new interpretation and elaboration of reality as it appears naturally.

On seeing certain passages of Blasetti's «FABIOLA» you will be surprised and think perhaps that there you have found certain traits of «neo-realism». A propos, in a stricking didactic shot by Soldati treating the Spirituality of God from a catechetical point of view you will be moved to speak of «neo-realism»! Thus we see that instead of restricting the sense and meaning of the word, it is enlarged and broadened.

It seems that following this comes the badly timed left-wing attack on Catholicism based on a supposed hostility to this new school of cinematography. This is to ignore the fact that it was Catholic Film Societies which first made «neorealist» films even before that term was «discovered».

De Sica's «LA PORTA DEZ CIEZO» and Blasetti's «UN GIORNO NELLA VITA» are films inspired purely by Christianity and produced by industrial groups working closely with the Italian Catholic Cinematograph Centre.

Catholics have only reacted to the contents of certain «neo-realist» films, not so much because they represented reality (although the moral opportunity to represent the whole truth without discrimination, forms in itself a talking point) but because these films hoped to attach to reality an equivocal value of example and symbol which they could not possess. In this connection we can cite examples such as the film «AMORE», scenes in Rossellini's «MIRACOLO» or the Mass scene in De Sica's «LADRI DI BICI-CLETTE». I ought to say here that there is amongst Catholics a movement of thought which tends towards a theoretic and philosophic basis (Thomist or neo-Thomist) to show that this form of presentation departs from reality as it is, in order to draw from it a moral, an idea or a thesis. This follows exactly the tradition of Catholic realism.

Following naturally from this and putting aside certain excesses and mistakes, films which reproduce a reality of a sort or part of reality or some of its aspects will be in many ways more effective than the numerous falsely optimistic films which distort life and its aspects.

When Rossellini was asked once the reason for the crudity and dark despair which had penetrated most of his films and when he was advised to try and put some light and hope into the souls of his characters, he replied «It is not my fault. I cannot make things fine and dandy at any price. First change the world and then I will show you one that is more serene.»

It is exactly at this point that the problem should be taken up. This belief of Rossellini and other directors; is it true or false? The question, though, will not now be one of form of expression but one of content. It will cover amongst other things, convictions, ideas on life, the moral world, a conception of reality and of hope and faith, possessed by each film director. It will be a question of knowing what idea the director has, or should have of the truth. This idea of the truth cannot often identify itself with reality

Why this indignation, this revengeful revolt, because reality is not always entirely true.

In any case one should realise that these realities do not seem absolute to film directors even to Rossellini who is certainly sound and workmanlike.

As regards his latest film «LA MACCHINA AMMAZZACCATTIVI», there is a predominence of imagination and a final affirmation of hope and goodness.

If you ask Rossellini if by this film he has changed his mind he will hurry to reply «No», and tell you that in it reality is just as precise and crude and truthful as in «GERMANIA ANNO ZERO».

In conclusion, it is the question of the delicate problem of educating the audience who see these «neo-realist» films which interests us above all. It is the old question of deciding whether the reading by teen-agers of the highly coloured romances of Delly or Eleanor Glynn will have a worse effect than if they read «Madame Bovary».

As for us, even without recommending Flaubert, we would neither advise Delly nor Mrs. Glynn. We would advise, rather, all works which, while representing reality, give also a judgement or interpretation about it which is in accordance with truth.

Diego Fabbri

A PROPOS «FABIOLA».

In the first issue of our Review, we published an article in which the Rev. Father Morlion O. P. set down—assuming his own responsibility—his very optimistic appreciation concerning the «Catholic» character of the «Universalia» Company and the quality of the film «FABIOLA». As to the latter, Father Morlion has just sent to us the following rectifications of his article:

«The commercial version of the film «FABIOLA», which has been produced in Italy, has deserved a moral classification from the Italian Catholic Cinema Centre: «Adults, with reservations». In my article, I thought it was unnecessary to make any moral reservations because as soon as I saw the working copy of the film which was finished in December 1948, I was assured that three scenes, more or less sensual, would not be reproduced in the final version. The promise to suppress these scenes was confirmed in writing to the councillors of the society, «Film Universalia», who organized a private performance, to be ready in time for the first issue. I wish to make it clear that my endeavour to obtain an improvement of the film was done on my own initiative without involving the responsibility of the O. C. I. C. or the Italian C. C. C., and that it is the distributing society, the Warner Bros., that has reproduced the film in Italy with the scenes and the publicity that call

In spite of the fairly diffused narration and the rather dull acting, pointed out in the above-mentioned article, the film gradually develops a Christian message, and it is, therefore, but fitting that the promise to remove the passages that call for reserve should be carried out by the agents responsible for the commercial distribution. After successful efforts made by the councillors, the film was withdrawn from circulation in Italy, after a few shows in Rome, in Trieste and in Sicily. Our friends of the Catholic Film Centres in the various countries where the film might be shown, will render a service to the film and to the cause it defends by pointing out to the distributors in their country that, by re-adding the scenes which demand moral reserves, they may spoil the success of the film in Catholic spheres».

It seems to us interesting to quote in extenso the appreciation of the film by the «Centro Cattolico Cinematografo» which classified this film among those for «Adults with reserve».

«The famous novel by Cardinal Wiseman, has been much modified. The thesis is positive, although it is not always clearly expressed. Numerous unsuitable scenes demand severe reservations. This film should not be shown except to well-informed adults. When judicious corrections have been made it might, perhaps, be possible to give this film a more favourable review.»

(Segnalazioni Vol. XXV. disp. 15-1949, p. II. 7).

LUXEMBOURG

French Production suffers a set-back

The statements which we made in the first number of this Review concerning the incresae in the number of French films distributed in Luxembourg have not been confirmed by events; rather the contrary. The part played by America in the presentation of film goes on increasing, that of Germany and Austria also (the confusion persists!), while France loses ground in a disturbing manner. Actually the statistics show that of the 150 films projected during the course of the past half year, a hundred came from America, thirty were German or Austrian and the remainder from the different Western countries.

The position of France on this list is almost last with six films only. What is the cause of this set-back? This is a question which puzzles not only the critics of the cinema but also the most interested part of our public who remain friendly to French culture. They all regret this eclipse and discuss, on the one hand, the difficulties in which French production finds itself and on the other the progressive and aggressive amoralism of the greater part of the films projected.

Happily the films which are by far the best are still French and always find the welcome which they deserve among our people. We need but mention the great success of the Resistance drama JERICHO and the triumph reserved for the biography of Christian-Jaque, «HOMME A HOMME», which has confirmed the ineradicable opinion of our public that French directors are perfectly capable of surpassing all others whenever they find themselves in possession of a worthwhile idea, an understanding

producer and actors of the quality of Pierre Brasseur, Pierre Larquey, Bernard Blier and J. L. Barrault.

France has all the trumps. When she decides to play them with her friends in other countries, the Luxembourgeois in the first place, will be delighted.

P. Grégoire

PARAGUAY

The cinema in Paraguay

As our first contribution to the International Film Review, we propose to give a general account of the Cinema in Paraguay.

Our national film production is very limited, and those actually made in the country are documentaries recording outstanding events. These films are short and are produced by the one and only firm specialising in this type of work: EMFILPA (Empresa Filmadora Paraguaya). Although the firm has not been working long it has achieved appreciable results from a technical point of view.

The lack of national production accounts for the fact that in order to provide a year's programme films have to be imported. The greater number come from the United States, Argentine, Mexico and Italy; a few others from France and Sweden.

Five Societies are engaged in the importing of films, four of them being in the Capital and one in Encarnacion, and they own cinemas in which the shows take place. So it is all a matter of private enterprise, with the one exception of the Municipal Cinema of Assomption.

The theatre season being very short in Paraguay, films have a long run throughout the year. Yet in spite of the long summer and the stifling heat there are no air-conditioned cinemas. A few places have solved the problem by using adjoining terraces and showing films in the open air.

With regard to the quality of the shows, there has been a marked lowering of standard during the past two years. A little less than two years ago Assomption still had premieres of all the best films in the world. Since then, the quality and number of premieres has been on the decline until the slump culminated in a crisis during the second half of last year's season. Too many old films have been shown, and they do not satisfy a public accustomed to screen products of a higher quality.

During the past few months the situation has improved, and the opening of a new and spacious

cinema in the near future will undoubtedly give fresh impetus to our plans for further improvement.

The causes of the crisis mentioned were chiefly two: First, the political unrest which has been unsettling the country for more than two and a half years and which reached a climax in the civil war of 1947; secondly, financial restrictions laid on all imports, permits for these being rigidly controlled by the State.

The Catholic public of Paraguay is guided in its choice of films by the joint criticisms of the newspaper «El Pueblo» of Buenos Aires and the Argentine Catholic Action.

Number of Cinemas and Films shown each year:

Paraguay has about 30 cinemas of which 14 are in Assomption; the others are in different centres of the interior. As already mentioned, a large modern cinema is to be opened in the near future, with several floors, refreshment bars, terraces, etc. Victoria Cinema will be built in Spanish Barroque style.

There are no purely Catholic Cinema Halls either in the capital or in the interior of the country. Certain Catholic Institutions show films from time to time, but the halls they use cannot be called cinemas in the strict sense of the word.

With regard to the number of films shown each year, we shall confine ourselves to the statistics of the capital for the year 1948, when an average of 40 films a month was shown. We would point out that 1948 cannot be considered a normal year for the reasons already mentioned.

Films shown during the past few months:

During practically the whole of last year patrons of the screen have had to be content with old films. However, it has been possible to enjoy a few new ones, chiefly Italian productions. The number of premieres has not touched that of normal years. Amongst the films of good quality shown during and since the latter part of the 1948 season we should like to name the following:

American Productions: «LA NOCHE ETER-NA» (ETERNAL NIGHT); «THE LADY OF THE LAKE» — very original technique; «THE SEA OF GRASS» — very powerful.

Further, three films on a banal theme which we have selected on account of the quality of the photography in technicolour: «HEART OF FIRE» (Mediocre, in spite of its pretentions). «SINBAD THE SAILOR» and «ALADIN».

The last two revived none of the memories of these tales as told in our youth.

Italian Productions: One film must be mentioned on account of the quality of its direction, though in other ways it did not reach the standard of other films from the same source: «ANTE EL TEMBLABA TODA ROMA».

Argentine Productions: «DIOS SE LO PAGUE» — Excellent direction and acting of Cordoba compensate for the melodramatic plot. «MALAMBO» — a good film. «LOS VERDES PARAISOS».

Repeats in Paraguay cinemas have been as follows: «EL PUENTE DE WATERLOO», «LA LLAMARADA», both American films. «LA VIRGEN QUE FORJO UNA PATRIA», «HISTORIA DE UN GRAN AMOR», «LA GALLINA CHUECA» — Mexican films.

Some films recently shown were of a regrettable nature, the psuedo-artistic-scientific variety that are mere pornography. With greater vigilance, the authorities could have avoided such films.

We do not wish to end this account without specially mentioning two films shown during the first six months of 1948. The high quality and moral tone of both show what can be achieved by films when they are inspired by a Christian spirit. They stand out as models and should be appreciated as masterpieces. The two films are: «THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES» (American) expertly directed by Frank Capra, and «FOUR STEPS IN THE CLOUDS» (Italian), a film in which all the art of the screen is dedicated to the greatness of the humble average man.

Alberto Martinez

HOLLAND

A Dutch picture.

As soon as we got word that work could be resumed, the *Nederlands Cinetone Studios* at Duivendrecht started their activities. Completely restored after the war, the first result of this enterprise was the film «NIET TE VERGEEFS» (But not in vain).

The presentation of this film was awaited with a lively interest, first of all because it was the first entertainment film made in Holland since the war, and secondly and most important, because it was hoped that it represented a break with banality, the cause of much Dutch film failure in the years before the war. It was also felt that it would assist in maintaining henceforth a healthy comparison with other small production countries such as Denmark or Switzerland.

This hope has been dashed. Even if one takes account of the difficulties which have dogged them, new technical equipment, still unfamiliar in use, lack of technically experienced crews and actors, it is still unlikely that «NIET TE VERGEEFS» will ever be regarded as the first of a series of Dutch films with with which the country is going to enter the international class.

The theme of the film is taken from a stage play written by Ben van Eysselstein who also collaborated with the director of the film Edmund T. Greville, in producing the script. The title is part of a message which Queen Wilhelmina broadcast to her people while she was an exile in London.

The story takes place in Occupied Holland in 1944, in the farm belonging to Farmer Alting (Hans van Ees). Concealed in the farm are a student (Jack Grimber) a Communist printer (Jan Retel) and a Jewish banker (Mathieu van Eysden). The son of the farmer is a member of the German S. S. When he declares that he intends to betray the maquis, the father slays his son after a terrible fight indoors. At the very moment when the fatal blow is fired the banker's wife is giving birth to a son who will (it is hoped) grow up in a world freed from the nazi spirit.

The author wished to show that in order that the sacrifices made may not be in vain it will be necessary to serve liberty in a spirit of tolerance.

Unfortunately, this idea is not very intelligently handled either from the point of view of the events, presented in too simple a fashion, or from the point of view of what the camera tells us. The dialogue alone, much too vigorously spoken, is made to do what it is the task of the visuals to suggest.

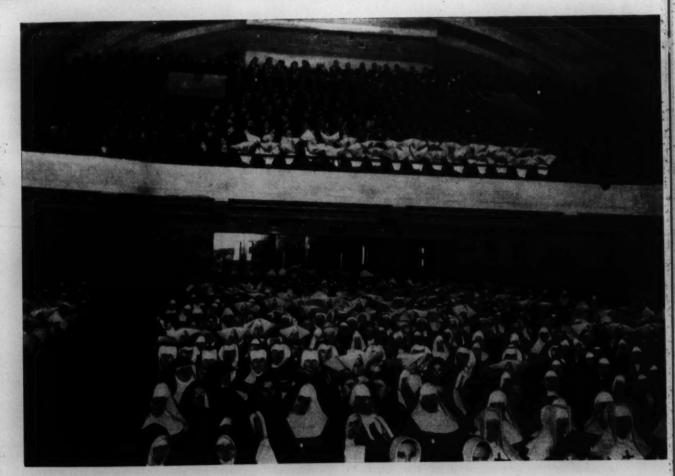
Greville places the greater part of his action within the restricted limits of the farm to which he has given something of the atmosphere of a Dutch folklore museum. This restricts the camera. But his greatest error is to have allowed too much freedom to his actors, too little accustomed to the exigencies of the camera. Their exaggerated gestures and theatrical manner rob the film of all veracity. The camera is almost motionless and does little but register points of view. The worst fault is the negligence, if not indifference to the demands of the mise en scène. Thus at the close of the film, the father fires at his son, whose two eyes open without the least suggestion of the movement which the reception of the bullet would entail.

The ending is one of the strong points of the film; the other being provided by the documentary treatment of the frightful famine winter which came to West Holland. These last scenes speak

NUNS AND FILM STARS



HOLLYWOOD
During the filming of «COME TO THE
STABLE». Loretta Young was visited at the studio by authentic Sisters from Bethlehem.



PARIS
1500 nuns were present
at a special showing of
«DR. LAENNEC».

OCIC- News Items



I. FEBRUARY 24th, 1949 — LUXEMBOURG: Meeting of the Executive Committee of O. C. I. C.



2. VATICAN CITY — O. C. I. C. publications, artistically bound, were offered to the Holy Father by our Secretary General during a Special Audience, March 25th, 1949.



3. LUXEMBOURG — The Grand Ducal family being welcomed at their arrival at the Marivaux cinema on the occasion of the presentation of the O. C. I. C. Special Diploma to the film: «Les Anges Marqués» (The Search).



4. BRUSSELS — Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth congratulates Maurice Cloche, director of the film «DR. LAENNEC» at the close of a Gala Performance organised for this film by O.C.I.C. in collaboration with «Caritas Catholique».



5. LONDON — A still from the film on the Holy Mass, made by Alan Turner and distributed by the Catholic Film Society under the title: «THE SACRIFICE WE OFFER».



6. ZURICH — Standing in front of the celebrated filing cabinets of the Swiss Catholic Film Commission, Dr. Reinert and his assistants discuss the moral classification of a recent film.

in a manner more pregnant and penetrating than the torrents of words which fall from the mouths of the characters, of the terrible results of the German occupation. The authors had some good intentions and we praise them for what they have been able to accomplish; but a film like «NIET TE VERGEEFS» demonstrates that Holland has much to learn about making fiction films, particularly with regard to the use of sound, and that almost everything depends on the man in charge of direction.

An English version of the film with the title «BUT NOT IN VAIN» and with English actors is being made but will not be ready for several months.

J. Fortuin

SWITZERLAND

French films in Switzerland

According to the official statistics published yearly by the Swiss Cinema Chamber, 507 films were imported in 1948. The U.S.A. with 279 films is at the head of the list as it was in previous years. They send us 55% of all the cinematographic works brought into the country. France occupies the second place with 97 films (19,1%), then comes Britain with 43 films (8%), Italy with 32 films (6%) etc.

The cultural and economic importance of French production is therefore easily seen. Unfortunately, quality has not kept pace with quantity and films capable of holding intelligent attention and worth critical notice are more and more rare. The French

film held for a long time a certain prestige, particularly among the intellectuals and more selective members of the public. The hopes which they had nourished as a result of post-war French out put have been sadly disappointed. In German Switzerland, at least, French films are now synonymous with frivolity, farce and pessimism or defeatism where they are not frankly immoral.

The last few months have given us scarcely one first-class French film. They rarely hold the screen for more than three weeks at most and it is an exception to hear a French film being discussed. There has recently been a relative success for realist and «milieu» films, which by reason of their dubious and sensual atmosphere, have attracted those in search of unhealthy sensationalism. This, for example, was the case with «DEDEE D'ANVERS» a film particularly damaging to French prestige which, after passing through Geneva almost unnoticed, came to Zurich and attracted audiences, hungry for this sort of thing, for 11 weeks, in a hall, it is true, with only 500 capacity.

However, the French cinema has other things to offer. We await with impatience, Maurice Cloche's «Dr. LAENNEC». We are certain that our public, conscious of its responsibility with regard to a healthy cinema, will give to this beautiful work the success it deserves. At Geneva which is, as a rule too easily deceived by the numerous existentialist and morally questionable films. Noël-Noël's «CASSE-PIED», a film which is delightfully French in spirit and humour, has been enthusiastically received by a large audience. That is to say: good French films have a good chance among our people. The only condition is that they are well-made and frankly French.

Dr. Charles Reinert



OUR CHILDREN ... AND OUR FILMS

No educationalist can nowadays afford to leave the cinema on one side. By educationalist, I mean anybody who is actively concerned with developing and encouraging the normal growth of the conscience, intelligence, personality, and civic sense of younger members of his community.

Whether we like it or not, the cinema is with us, and like fire, it demands to be treated either as a good servant or as a bad master.

It has become the habit to refer to the cinema as the seventh art. And so it may be, at its best. But in the majority of the forms in which we see it, the cinema is no more than a means of expression, with the same range and capacity as printing. Like the printing press the film can be used to produce literature or trash, dignified prose or cheap journalese.

The cinema is not a form of art, but a possible art medium, and since it is essentially a means of expression it can say all manners of things good and bad, which simply do not require to be elevated to the level of artistic maturity. Competent craftsmanship can and does produce much film that makes no pretence at being art, but which is useful for the practical transmission of information, ideas, illustration, explanation or instruction.

But the film can tell half truths in such a way that they become lies. It can say one thing by picture, say the opposite in the commentary, and introduce a completely different idea in the background music. It is in fact capable of an orchestration of ideas, and calls for a capacity for interpretation, a critical sense, and a standard of values on the part of the audience. It demands a trained ability to select.

When the cinema first appeared to an incredulous public, almost any banality that moved was fit subject to arouse astonishment and interest, - a running horse or a train entering a station. However quickly this stage of admiration is passed, every youngster has to go through it, even to-day in a world that becomes fuller of mechanical and scientific causes of wonderment. But he goes through it otherwise prepared and developed than the adult. When the cinema first arrived, it was introduced to mature men and women, to whom the novelty meant something entirely different from what it means to the adolescent of today, who has been born in a world where the cinema already exists. Adolescence is a period of continual discovery, observation and adjustment, and the great difference between the adolescent of today and the adult of yesterday is that the adults see only a means of distraction where the adolescent sees and eagerly uses the cinema as an instrument of social and moral observation.

This is the reason why educationalists, as I have defined them, cannot afford to leave the cinema on one side. It is true that there is an increasing movement for the formation of film appreciation groups, among amateur clubs and at some schools and universities. My personal experience of such movements, which I do not claim to be large enough to warrant a generalisation, has left me with the impression that they are mainly concerned with the cinema as an art form, and not, as I feel it should be seen, as a means of expression and observation.

Censorship is at best nothing but a surgical operation. It may remove rotten tissue, but it does not remove the cause of the disease. I believe that we shall not get more good films until we get more good people, and that is where the responsibility comes back to the educationalist. It ceases to be primarily a film matter, but rather a matter of adequate preparation for adolescence, so that youth will not seek to obtain from films what they have failed to obtain from their parents and

But what can the educationalist do to encourage the critical sense of the young people for whom he is responsible? How can he introduce standards and criteria? Is he to teach the film as a living language, that is, usage first and grammar afterwards, or as a dead language, which is the apparent approach of film appreciation groups, that is, grammar first, and usage afterwards?

I think that there can be no doubt that the educationalist must accept film as a living language. He cannot teach ethics to the very young, but he can provide a basis of sound experience of the best and simplest and most straightforward things that films have to offer, and it is upon this foundation that the maturing child can formulate a sense of values.

That is going to become a necessity, as authorities and governments in increasing numbers, forbid the public cinemas to the under-sixteens, under-eighteens, or whatever age is chosen as adequately prepared to resist corruption. But unless the authorities who vote these restrictions take at the same time steps to prepare youth for their qualifying birthday, they are merely locking the padlock of Pandora's box.

I myself like the definition of schooling which says that its object is to teach the young how to learn. From that point of view, there simply must be made a place in the schools for teaching the young how to learn from films: how to discriminate and how to assess.

There are two fields, — the purely instructional film, and the specifically children's entertainment film. Both of these fields, in varying degrees in different countries are insufficiently developed. They are looked upon as luxury, reward, experiment, stunt, fad, option, relaxation, and any number of other things, but never sufficiently recognised as an essential training for modern living. The films that are supplied to these two fields come from two sources, — the sifted best of the documentaries and lighter entertainment films, and in a very small minority, from specific productions for the young.

And here is the surprising thing. The mature teacher, with many years of experience, who takes stock of many years of his teaching life, generally underpaid and often ill-considered, can find much solace and satisfaction in the certainty that there has been an accumulated value, which justifies everything, in a touch here, a word there, a reproof, a word of encouragement, — in fact in a whole host of trifles which in themselves mean little, but which in the enormous mass created by an army of teachers throughout the world have helped to lift men to better things.

Yet when it comes to define his position as regards this matter of films, the teacher talks in terms of budgets and individuals, — overlooking the essential fact that the pressure of four little fingers, properly placed, can lift the average man off the ground.

Education cannot be run on charity in a modern world. But it can be run by cooperation, provided that all the educationalists who accept their responsibility towards the film add their efforts together. And when I speak of educationalists I do not leave out the parent, whose responsibility is greater than most others. The combined effort of teachers and parents has worked many minor miracles. It could work major miracles if it tackled the problem of the film on a big scale.

Marc FRANZISKUS
The Educational Film Institute, Luxembourg

THE EDUCATIONAL FILM IN LUXEMBOURG

For many years now the use of the film in education has been the subject of heated discussion in every country. In Luxembourg it was Mr. J. P. Manternach, director of the Training School at Esch, who first foresaw the great service that could be rendered by the cinema, giving lessons more life, greater attractiveness and intuitional value.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that this attractive idea has remained almost undeveloped in spite of all the efforts of its promoter. The educational film was living, so to speak, on the fringe of scholastic organisation and the first showings were made outside the framework of school life, on the initiative of a few enthusiasts. It was not until after the war that the question of educational films sprang into life anew. To-day it is generally

acknowledged that visual aids to teaching are one of the most powerful instruments that educationists and teachers ought to have at their disposal, since most countries regard the question as one of primary importance, and have laid the foundations of great organisations; to this Luxembourg cannot be indifferent.

In practically every country central institutes have been formed whose main work has been to lend schools projectors and films suited to both primary and secondary curricula. In this way our own Educational Film Institute was founded in 1945. Its first task was the creation of a film library corresponding to the needs of our schools. All films and strips were classed according to the methods of teaching and in 1947 the two catalogues published by the Institute were sent to all

schools, informing the teaching personnel of all the visual aids that could be placed at their service. Although the Institute actually lists more than 300 films and 450 strips, it must be admitted that this stock is insufficient. That is why we are having copies made — 5 or 6 to a film — in order to meet the demand. In the same way the laboratory attached to the Institute produces by its own methods copies of strips in the 35mm format.

Meanwhile, the idea of the educational film has penetrated, if not broadly, at least deeply into the educational world, and has become a subject of great interest. A squad of experts is already at work and refuses to be discouraged by the technical and practical difficulties. These educationists have equipped their premises well and if they sometimes use an emergency dimming apparatus, they work conscientiously and the results obtained in class are revealing.

But the educational world, while adapting itself to new educational principles created by the conditions of the age, always looks with certain apprehension on anything having the charm of novelty. That is why I considered it advisable to arrange introductory showings in every district under inspection. These showings consisted of a theoretical part, illustrated by the American film HOW TO USE THE FILM IN CLASS, and a practical section which initiated beginners into the working of the apparatus. I felt greatly encouraged when I saw that these showings were not received with the indifference and coldness of scepticism. The great majority of educationists recognised the importance of visual teaching in school, and since that time more than 40 schools have bought projectors so that if this progress continues I have good hopes that in a few years' time every school will have its own.

But I cannot deny that there are still objections to overcome — objections mainly of the psychological order, because the cinema still enjoys the reputation of being a distracting influence. Moreover, certain persons, although well-intentioned and in a position greatly to encourage a far more rapid development of the educational cinema, sometimes seem to think that the education film is a cause of anxiety calculated to make teachers and children merely receptive — as if a mother ought never to teach her child to walk.

It is certainly not easy to understand the grudging attitude of certain teachers towards scientific progress and its practical application. For these are not persons averse to novelty on account of prejudice or indifference. On the contrary, this attitude is most often found among conscientious teachers, profoundly aware of their vocation and giving to it their very best, but who, as a result of a mistaken conception of education which pre-

vents them from reconciling the idea of an attractive method of teaching with rigorous discipline, reject with apprehension anything which could even indirectly disturb that discipline. They forget, too, the lesson of the history of teaching which shows us the unwearying activity of the legions of educators throughout the centuries who have never ceased to extol visual teaching as most closely conforming to human nature. The objections which they raise to teaching films are always the same — waste of time, too crowded programmes, eye-strain, atrophied imagination, etc. so easy of refutation by those who use the film with understanding. For it is by no means our intention to hold up the film as the only intuitional method in school. On the contrary, film and picture ought not to be used except in cases where there are no other possible means of illustrating a fact or an object. Visual aid ought not to be used except in circumstances where it brings greater clearness and understanding. Certain psychological prejudices would surely disappear if future teachers were to be trained to use the projector and look after diapositives and stills, and to teach with the aid of the films. For there is a methodology of visual teaching just as there is a methodology of arithmetic and reading. It is through practical instruction that future teachers should be enabled to evolve a personal method, with the object of integrating the film along with all other teaching methods.

In this way the Institute of Educational Films would obtain valuable collaborators, who, well-versed in the matter, could submit to them valuable ideas on the necessity of providing films and diapositives for their schools, inform them of the results obtained among the different types of school, and develop visual teaching still further.

The fulfilment of the wish I expressed at the last Congress of the C. I. D. A. L. C. is of primary importance for the rational use of the educational film in every country. Without this special institution, the use of the film would remain for many years the exclusive work of a few pioneers — a state of affairs greatly to be regretted.

But there are still other factors capable of hindering the full development of the educational film. First comes the question of finance. All our ministries are suffering from a permanent lack of funds. The Minister of National Education has granted subsidies for the purchase of apparatus to the amount of a third of the purchase price for districts devastated by the Rundstedt offensive. Will he be able to continue these subsidies if the scale of purchase goes on increasing as now seems likely? There are in actual fact 80 projectors being used by a thousand schools. Leaving aside town schools, where there is one apparatus per school building, it can be said that in the open country

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In order to provide our schools with the best material, the Minister has set up a commission to inspect apparatus from the mechanical, optical and electrical aspects, and only apparatus certified by the government is authorised for use in our schools.

The question of the use of the sound film in schools, so much debated in international conferences, need not trouble us too much. We have opted for the silent film in primary teaching, for technical pedagogic, psychological and financial reasons. We should prefer to deal with the practical application rather than to mark time by discussing without result this thorny question thus depriving our children for a still longer time of this potent teaching method. It is besides almost a necessity for us to utilise the silent film; our country being bi-lingual, the primary school children, especially those in the first and second classes, would have too much difficulty in understanding French and English. For teaching in secondary schools, however, we recommend the purchase of apparatus for sound films — always provided that these sound film projectors are fitted with interchangeable drums, i. e. drums with one row of teeth for talkies and two rows of teeth for silent films; just as we do not grudge the purchase of such apparatus to the districts that wish to use them in popular education, if such projectors comply with the above-mentioned conditions.

The arrangement of the projection room was more difficult. Good material for blacking out was not to be found and no definite system of dimming was agreed upon. To-day the whole matter has altered, and the State architect has constructed model plans for a faultless system of dimming. During the first period we had the same trouble in finding good screens. It was impossible to get any. Then after many attempts we discovered that in the final count we could do without a screen at all if the colour of the wall was a yellowish white. Several schools to-day project straight on the wall and quite successfully.

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M. Franziskus.

Claude MACKE «Educateurs», Paris.

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The swift expansion of the cinema, and the new trends which have resulted from talking films, have quickly presented the problem of the attendance of minors in the theatres.

Schools, welfare bodies and the «family» type of cinema circuit have attempted some protective measures, sometimes in the form of programmes of selected films, sometimes by an indication of what programmes are suitable to be seen by the whole family or otherwise. But the problem of the attendance of children at the cinema has not been solved officially. A Film Control Commission is in existence whose composition and character were freshly defined by the decree of July 3rd 1945. But it merely groups representatives of different Ministries on the one hand, and those of the cinema profession on the other. It can forbid certain films to the under-sixteens, but this ban remains ineffective unless the organisation supplies an adjunctive publicity of it. A scheme of regula-

tion is being studied: an inter-ministerial Commission has been set up.

The Ministry of Information proposes to forbid all films to children, except a few chosen for their educational quality. The Ministry of National Education for its part would seem to wish to encourage, primarily, the production of films for children and the organisation of film-shows for them by a favourable system of tax relief. When the children's cinema has been realised, admission to picture theatres would be completely forbidden to young children, except for those theatres where films chosen in this way would be shown *).

Considerable efforts in this direction have already been made by private organisations.

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(the Cendrillon Club). Drawing extensively from the repertoires of Chaplin and Arbuckle, she was led to look for short films, and built up, little by little, a film library of about 800 films from all sources and of all kinds, latterly enriched by a puppet cartoon produced by Starevitch from a scenario by Sonika Bô.

In 1936, Mme Lahy-Hollebecque, while working on the organisation of children's leisure, founded the Ciné-jeune Association, whose end is to provide wholesome shows of good quality for children of from 10 to 15 years.

Ciné-jeune was the kernel of a wider association, the Comité Français du Cinéma pour la jeunesse (1946) whose president is Dr. Wallon. This Committee's intention is to create for French youth a cinema commensurate with its development. Its activity, still in its infancy and with limited possibilities, has already shown itself in the organisation of feature film shows of both French and foreign films. A competition of scenarios for children was arranged last year.

It is to be noted, furthermore, that the Union Française du Cinéma Educateur Laïque (U. F. C. E. L., a section of the Ligue de l'Enseignement) does not limit its activity merely to shows in classrooms but organises public shows as well, especially in rural areas.

1946, too, saw the beginning of the Ecran des Jeunes. This organisation, moved by the desire to break ground in the practical field, concerned itself with production and distribution. To it is due, most notably, a series of shorts of original technique, based on the traditional Guignol. It has also collected a stock of selected films, adequate in quality, variety and numbers, to supply theatres which wish to organise children's shows. Its recent constitution as a cultural association (Association Nationale pour L'Enfance et La Jeunesse) will give it fresh efficacy, and it may be foreseen that the production of new films will be intensified.

It is interesting to note that each of these three organisations has made international contacts. At

the time of the Cannes Festival in 1947, Mme Sonika Bô got together the representatives of several other nations with a view to setting up an international children's cinema association. At the same time the Comité Français was organizing an international film day for children. In 1948, at the biennial festival in Venice, the Ecran des Jeunes took part in the organisation of an international commission. It presented a programme which was dubbed into Italian and had great success. It is possible that agreements with other countries may result shortly in regular exchanges of children's films.

This rather summary review of the position of the children's cinema in France would be incomplete without mention of an interesting attempt at the formation of children's film societies. Certain educators have set themselves the task, in the course of practical education, of making the cinema not only a wholesome recreation but a means of culture. These film societies are organised as real co-operatives of the young spectators. Responsible officers are elected and take part in the choice of programmes and in the financial administration. In addition, a film society bulletin is edited and printed by the youngsters themselves. The presence of a commentator, who is an educator with a knowledge of and taste for the cinema, allows, during the shows, of comment on certain passages in the film, of observing reactions, of encouraging the children to express themselves, of correcting, subsequently, certain impressions, in short, of introducing the young spectators to the cinema by removing from the shows their normal character of passivity and private escapism.

It is to be wished that a similar scheme should become general, for it provides an experience of social life while offering considerable educational possibilities; by its means, the cinema, whose regrettable influence on youth is only too well known, will become, as it should be, one of the essential props of modern education.

Henri AGEL Professor in the «Lycée Voltaire» Paris

THE CINE CLUB AT SCHOOL

When organizing at the Lycée Voltaire in Paris, the class in preparation for the Institute of Advanced Camera Study, we reserved, as was required, an hour a week for the discussion of a film. While presiding at these debates the idea came to me to apply the same technique to my Fifth

Form (pupils of 15—16 years), though, naturally, in a less ambitious form. I began by telling my pupils—having ascertained their tastes for the cinema—that once each fortnight they were to see a film, chosen the previous week, and to give, orally, as detailed a review of it as possible.

To begin with the scheme was a modest one, but looking at it after a lapse of time one sees that it was of considerable value. In the first place, it put the cinema into its proper place as an integral part of culture, by making it an object of sustained study and interest, a question of aesthetics, and consequently one began to see developed among these young people a more selective attitude morally and intellectually speaking, with regard to the «seventh art», which, if they persevere, would guarantee the excellence of their taste in the future. If this experiment were to spread it might one day help to create an informed public, not easy to please, which would be willing to boycott, and perhaps not merely by staying away, those stupid productions which redound to the credit neither of commerce nor art. Following a strictly pedagogical plan, the critical sense is sharpened and, in general, the mental and artistic faculties of these lads of 15-16 years, by means of an exercise which certains plenty of out-of-school diversion, are trained in a way that bears happily upon other departments of study as well.

We began our work one Tuesday morning in February by organizing a free discussion about «ODD MAN OUT». The more audacious or inspired among them gave, each in his turn, his impressions. What struck them most about this film was its verisimilitude to facts as they are: some noticed the arbitrary character of some episode; the uneasiness suggested by the general feel of the film, the disconcerting nature of several passages in it. Pressed to define in a word the general impression which they carried away from the film some of them declared that it was a «sombre» work, all dark. I took advantage of this to ask whether this characteristic of darkness which they had noticed did not suggest that the director of the film had some purpose in view. After a certain amount of groping we reached the idea of tragedy, destiny, of fate conceived as of playing an essential part in

the film.

This significant weaving of images, producing an atmosphere that brought unity to «ODD MAN OUT» it remained to see how the director had used it to bring the film to its high pitch of efficiency with the

means at his disposal.

I then drew their attention to the lighting and more particularly to the work of the director of photography. Together we picked the most satisfactory moments in the film, among others the final scene. Once taken up with these sequences I do not put a stop to their discussion until they have exhausted it. The same passage, gone over with great detail, gives us an opportunity to remark on the editing which imparts so pathetic a rhythm to this last episode of the tragedy: alternating views of the two fugitives caught between the gate and the police cars advancing slowly through the snow.

There is no stiffness about the first discussion. It ranges successively through the quality and worth of the scenario, the setting, lighting, editing, acting, the sequence make-up, the trackings and pannings, the craneshots and all the other elements of the syntax of cinematography. I briefly point these things out during the last five minutes thus setting the subject for the next talk.

This was devoted to «SPELLBOUND». In order to judge their reaction, as well as the difference with regard to appreciation among our band of critics, I asked them to allot a mark on the film: 15 to 16 over 20 was the almost unanimous result. (This corresponds to the note classifying the progress of pupils in France).

After an hour's study during which certain weaknesses in the story (the singular behaviour of the amourous young psychoanalyst) certain tricks of the director, Alfred Hitchcock (a taste for cruelty) certain deficiencies of the setting (the ski-ing scene) were minutely unveiled in an analysis in which each one took part, the impression of the majority was that the film merited hardly 11 to 12 over 20.

The severity of the class seemed to increase with the third film studied: «FORT APACHE» by John Ford. Truth to tell, most of the pupils were not too sure what it was about this film which they disliked. It had made them examine their conscience. A series of soundings in what is now the classic order: scenario, direction, lighting, rhythm, acting, music, had served but to the expression of their common dissatisfaction in the question «what kind of film is this?» It is not a Western, it is not an «atmosphere» film. It is not an epic or character study. In short, the problem of precision in scripting was clearly perceived. In addition, I tried for this third session a method in opening the discussion, which I had already used in my preparatory class at the Paris Institute for Advanced Cinema Study, namely: what questions does the film pose? The answers, naturally of unequal interest, were varied: military honour, discipline, the army, colonisation, Westerns. Considerations of a psychological nature interested them more than purely cinematographical questions. These young people tended to look upon a film too much in the manner of a stage piece, they treated it as they would a book. It is only when stimulated, guided, kept to the point, that they arrive at a clearly different critical outlook. On the other hand, their moral sense needs no stimulation: it is on the alert.

Need I add that these debates were followed with the warmest interest? The pupils spontaneously informed themselves about the next film to be seen. I know from their families that the discussion continued at home and what animation they aroused. It is too soon to draw precise conclusions, but it is safe to say that the desired objective is on the way to being realised, not, perhaps in the immediate future, but it would seem that vocations are being formed which will be devoted to the perfecting of the art of film.

CATHOLIC ENTERPRISES

NEW MOVEMENT FOR CHRIST AT WORK IN HOLLYWOOD

by William H. MOORING

While «JOAN OF ARC» was battling against communist-organized picket lines on Broadway, director Victor Fleming who directed the film, realized that this was to be the last motion picture of his distinguished career. Just before he died he attended the Hollywood première. The next day he watched several hours as the crowds gathered to see the film. Then he went off for a rest his doctors had ordered.

He told a friend «it feels wonderful to have done so well with the story because I have a feeling there will not be any more.. for me.» He was seized shortly afterwards with a heart attack. In a few hours he was dead.

Back in Hollywood a communist-inspired whispering campaign had already begun to prevent «JOAN OF ARC» from gaining favour with the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. All the «columnists» made the same point. The film was wonderfully acted, but it was pretentious; too packed with people; a Hollywood spectacle with no heart to it.

Actually it was the very fact that the heart of this great story of a great martyred saint pounded and pulsated with Faith, that had aroused organized opposition from the leftists and their atheistic fellow travellers. They see in «JOAN OF ARC» a Hollywood movie dealing with the spiritual essences of Faith. They hope the film will not succeed. If it does they know that several other religious pictures will result. Even at this moment several studios are working on different story ideas, all with a religious basis. No fewer than four companies are considering a film based on «THE LIFE OF CHRIST».

More than a year ago, producer-director-writer John Farrow prepared such plans. A leading Hollywood producer showed interest, but this particular producer always asks his wife's opinion. She is a «liberal». Her friends include many active members of left-front organizations. She asked one question of Mr. Farrow. «Are you proposing to make Christ out to be Divine, or do you see him — as he is — a great social reformer whose philosophy was rejected by the world?» Farrow answered firmly. «I am a Catholic, Madam.» The film was not made. Now others are considering. When filmed it will be about our Divine Saviour. Since then, there has sprung up in Hollywood a tremendous movement known as «The Christophers». Started by a Maryknoll priest in New York — the Rev. James Keller — it has no officers, holds no meetings, passes no resolutions. It has only one rule. «Bear Christ as Saint Christo-pher did». That means lots of different things to lots of different people, but to all the Christophers in the movie industry - and Father Keller has recruited hundreds who in turn have recruited hundreds of others until the movement in the studios, is thousands strong — it means trying to bring Christ into motion picture plays.

No membership lists are ever printed but there is no secrecy either. Recently when Father Keller gave two Christopher retreats in Hollywood, Loretta Young, Rosalind Russell, Joan Leslie, Irene Dunne, Jeanne Crain and Mrs. Bob Hope were present. With them were women and girls who do all kinds of work in the studios, unknown to the public, but not to the service of Christ through this Christopher movement. A few days later I attended a retreat for men. The husbands of these stars, Doctor Francis Griffen, married to Irene Dunne, Fred Brisson, a film producer and husband of Rosalind Russell, Tom Lewis, influential radio executive and husband of Loretta Young—Paul Brinckman, actor-husband of Jeanne Crain and Ricardo Montalban, actor-husband of Loretta Young's sister, all came to hear Father Keller and to take new ideas for the «Bearing of Christ» in Hollywood.

How do they work? In many ways of course. Too numerous to mention in detail.

A few illustrations will have to do. They offset the whispering campaign against films such as «JOAN OF ARC». They start a counter-whispering campaign, developing to a loud shout that the film is a great public success. They go out getting people to pay at the box office for they know that «JOAN OF ARC», which cost almost five million dollars to produce, must take in at least nine million dollars to pay its way.

They talk to story-agents, writers, producers, directors, actors. Always the idea is to strengthen human faith in the box office value of good ideas and good ideas are not those in which no mention of sin or sorrow appear, but those in which the right is seen to win fair contest against the wrong.

Recently Loretta Young and her husband were able to do a wonderful job. The celebrated American writer-politician Claire Booth Luce, recent convert to Catholicism, who is a friend of Miss Young and Mr. Lewis, wrote an original screen story titled «COME TO THE STABLE».

It is a tale about two nuns who came from France to America and in Pennsylvania — in a little town called Bethlehem — without money or help, set up a hostel and retreat. In her story Mrs. Luce makes it a hospital. Mrs. Luce had been given a contract by 20th Century Fox, to adapt the C. S. Lewis book «The Screwtape Letters» to the screen. She had been bitterly disappointed by the studio's decision not to go on with the proposed film. So she tried to interest them in «COME TO THE STABLE». Loretta Young, whose services 20th-Century Fox sought for a series of pictures, talked them into letting her star in the Luce story of the nuns. They hesitated, then consented. The script as developed — not by Mrs. Luce — minimized Catholic feeling. For instance there was mention of a Saint who has never existed. «Too Catholic to mention a real one», said the studio people. But with the Christopher touch Loretta was able to convince them that Saint Jude, patron of hopeless causes, would be fine in the story. At first they shied at the name «Jude», but she told the story of the Saint and brought Saint Jude medals to the studio. Eventually the fictitious saint came out of the story; Saint Jude went in.

Christopher activity is never interfering or destructive. Always constructive. The direct Christian approach. So be sure that somewhere in all the studios today, in various departments, among people of widely differing crafts and various degrees of influence, there are Christophers at work. Some are organizing a public campaign to combat modern trends on the part of American film commentators and radio critics who offer «news» about Hollywood scandals, as if film stars

were exempt from the same moral law as the rest of people. They are telephoning radio stations pointing out, but never protesting, instances in which guilty intrigue, perhaps between a film star and an Indian merchant prince, has been wrongly referred to as a «romance» or in which a «happy-ever-after» note has been sounded as a finale to some divorce story. Famous columnists such as Louella Parsons (who is herself a Catholic convert) are reminded whenever it seems that they have presented a scandal item as if it were a pattern for the masses to follow, that great harm can be done this way to Christian ideals. Each time the letter or telephone message ends, not on a note of complaint, but with a friendly invitation to «Join us and work with the Christo-

Whenever it is known that a story in preparation has given rise to genuine doubts (as for instance did «MONSIEUR VINCENT» among regular French movie production circles until M. Cloche got into touch with M. La Grandière of «L'Office Familial») Christophers attempt to suggest or supply the soundest advice and where necessary the moral courage to get things going. «MONSIEUR VINCENT» is to play in a relatively small theater in Los Angeles where foreign films, many of them unacceptable to Catholic audiences, are featured. Christophers are playing a big part already — five weeks ahead of the opening — to increase Catholic interest and support for the film. Had it been shown before December 31st 1948, Christophers would have been «talking» it into prominence as worthy of Academy recognition, using the fact that the Fresnay performance recently won the «best actor» award in London.

The rallying point for the Christopher offensive in Hollywood seems to have been near to the wood pile on which Saint Joan gasped her final prayer of «Jesus, Jesus»!

Those who stand implacably against the Christian Church, are wishing and working that «JOAN OF ARC» may fail, thus to show that the movie public resents religion in motion pictures.

The Christophers — not only in Hollywood but all over the USA — are working to see that «JOAN OF ARC» once again wins the victory.

William H. Mooring.

THE HOLY FATHER'S ADDRESS

In an allocution to the Lenten preachers in Rome, March 23rd, 1949. Pius XII made several allusions to the problem of the Cinema.

Having thanked those «celebrated actors from the world's best known cinema centre», for their collaboration in the crusade for Family Prayers, the Holy Father continued; «It is noticeable that even in those films which are indicated as morally unobiectionable, men live and die as if there is no God, no Redeemer, no Church. We do not wish to discuss the matter further at this point, but it is no less true that the consequences of these «neutral» films are already extensive and deep.»

One could not ask for a more categorical indication of the necessity for constructive action in order to penetrate film industry with the spirit of Christianity. If such action were not already operative we should be now seeing nothing but these «neutral» films, of films quite frankly revolting, about which Pius XII spoke in these anxious terms: «A further effect of the Mass on men, salutary for them and for their families, would

be the closing of their eyes and their hearts to all that which in the press, the film and the stage, offends modesty and violates the moral law When one thinks, on the one hand, of the disgusting crudities and effronteries published in the press, the reviews, on the screen and the stage; and on the other, of the inconceivable aberrations of parents who are willing to take pleasure in such horrors even in the company of their children — a blush comes to the face, the blush of anger and disgust. The campaign against this pest, especially in bringing to the notice of the public authorities the existence of such displays, has already had consoling results, and we hope that they will become even more efficacious and beneficient.

«Thanks be to heaven, in certain countries, particularly those which have important film production industries, Catholics are working methodically and with success for the moral and human dignity of film...»

One can hardly imagine an encouragement more authoritative or more precious for the efforts which our Review is endeavouring in its modest way to serve.

PONTIFICAL COMMISSION FOR DIDACTIC AND RELIGIOUS FILMS

The Holy See has approved the Statutes of the PONTIFICIA COM-MISSIONE PER LA CINEMATO-GRAFIA DIDATTICA E RELI-GIOSA, founded in 1948 to examine cinematographic works to illustrate Christian doctrine and the teaching of the Catholic Church, such films being kindly submitted by their producers for the appreciation of the Holy See. This Commission has an international character. It is presided over by Mgr. M. J. O'Connor, Titular Bishop of Tespia. It has as members, Mgr. M. Raffa of the Sacred Congregation of Councils,-Mgr. F. Prosperini representing O. C. I. C., Mgr. J. Ibert and Sr. J. Avetta. The Commission has its centre in the Palazzio S. Carlo in the Vatican State City.

The Secretary of State made it clear on this occasion that the constitution of the Pontifical Commission in no way changes the competence of the International Catholic Cinema Office or of the National Centres charged by the Hierarchies with the task of morally classifying the output of the cinema studios.

O. C. I. C. PAYS HOMAGE TO THE HOLY FATHER.

On March 25th the Holy Father gave a special audience to Dr. André R u s z k o w s k i, the Secretary General for External Relations of the International Catholic Cinema Office. Mr. R u s z k o w s k i offered to His Holiness in the name of our Organization, artistically bound copies of the publications of O. C. I. C. notably the book «Les Catholiques Parlent du Cinema» and the three editions of the «International Film Review» in English, Spanish and French.

On this occasion the Holy Father underlined the importance which the Holy See attaches to Catholic action in matters concerning the cinema and accorded His blessing to all those who, in the various countries all over the world, have consecrated themselves to this work.

During his stay in Rome, Dr. Ruszkowski was also able to discuss the problems concerning the activities of O. C. I. C. with His Excellency Mgr. Montini, Substitute for the Secretary of State, with Mgr. Valerio Valeri, President of the Committee for the Holy Year, with the Reverend Father Janssens, Father General of the Society of Jesus, with Mgr. Raffa, President for the time being of the Pontifical Commission for Didactic and Religious Films, and also with the directors of Italian Catholic Action and the Catholic Cinema Central office.

«JOAN OF ARC» Screened in Vatican.

The motion picture «JOAN OF ARC», was presented in the St. Charles Palace of Vatican City, on the 29th of March, in the new Screening Room of the Pontifical Committee for Religious Films.

Vatican Officials, who attended this private meeting, included their Excellencies Monsignor J. B. Montini, Monsignor V. Valeri, C-te E. P. Galeazzi, Monsignors Raffa, and Prosperini, Avv. V. Verones e. At the beginning of the meeting, our General Secretary, André Ruszkowski, gave the reasons of the Directorial Committe, for its moral support to this film. The Rev. Doncoeur, historical advisor for the film, explained production problems, from the historical point of view, involved by «JOAN OF ARC», in Hollywood.

On the day after, he gave on the same topic, at the «Centre St. Louis des Français in Rome», a very brilliant conference, attended by a large audience, including the French Ambassador to Vatican, Comte W. d'Ormesson, Monsignor Fontenelle, and other personalities. Rev. Doncoeur emphasized in his speech, the importance of cooperation between Catholic intellectual circles, and the film industry.

Addressing a numerous audience of professionals connected with the cinema on the 15th anniversary of the Technical Office of the Family Cinema, whose activities cover over the Industrial North and Pas de Calais areas, our friend Verheye outlines facts and ideas which we think useful to bring to the knowledge of those of our readers who wish to have some practical information on this point.

What are we?.... Exhibitors like the rest, but exhibitors who are different from the rest by the fact that they have fixed for themselves a definite object: to work to the end that the cinema may become again what it should never have ceased to be—a harmless family distraction.

Our ambition is to help on the distribution of good films and consequently we refuse to show films which we consider to be harmful to the majority of our spectators. We do not want fathers and mothers of families to have to blush before their children because of anything they see in our cinemas.

But, you will say, there is no need to establish an Office of Censors for this purpose — the Proprietors or Managers of the halls know their business well enough to be able to achieve this result — they too have moral ideals.

Alas! our Office is unfortunately only too necessary! I know personally many cinema managers, respectable men, excellent professionals, and fathers of families who, isolated, often find themselves obliged to show films of which they do not approve. It would be asking them to be saints or heroes to expect them to exclude from their programmes pernicious films which all too often mean boxoffice profits. Here we are at the heart of the matter. Managers are commercial persons with the duty of making their cinemas pay in order to provide themselves and their families with a living. They are often faced with a case of conscience: show a bad film and make a profit; refuse to show it and take a second-class work instead.

We have no intention of throwing stones at these members of the profession; we know them and understand their difficulties; but that very fact shows how necessary the establishment of our Office is.

Only those cinemas which are banded together can impose a discipline able to put our ideal into practice: to know and to pass only those films which are suitable for the family.

We are proud to be able to say that during these 15 years, in spite of difficulties and numerous obstacles, the family policy has been respected and I can call the distributors here present to witness that we have never allowed our commercial interests to come before our moral ideas.

Our Office was formed in 1933. Its conception was painful, its birth difficult; only a dozen cinemas gave it their support. Our origin was hardly an event. The profession looked upon us as something curious, distributors regarded us as negligible as clients, exhibitors thought of us as a vague association of cinemas for Children of Mary. At the time, there were certain colleagues who looked upon us with hostility. Little by little, however, the infant grew, until 1939, on the eve of the war we counted 43 cinemas in our organisation.

The war upset us like so many other things. Some of our halls were requisitioned, others closed because they were in a dangerous zone, others decided to close until the departure of the enemy.

So from '39 to '44 we were mostly in hiding, but from the moment of the Liberation, the task was taken up again with renewed vigour.

I will not go into details about our teenage but with the coming of adult status we can boast of 126 cinemas in the Nord and Pas de Calais region. 126 cinemas which have projected 6.640 programmes this year, 126 cinemas which have this year paid more than 57 millions to the distributors at Lille.

If this leaves you cold, think of it as representing a sixth of the total returns realised in our two Departments during the same period of time.

These returns speak for themselves and require no commentary; they prove that Family Halls are possible; that the little client of 1933 has grown by 1948 to a personage which can be neither ignored nor neglected.

These results have been achieved only through the efforts of the members of this Office; it is due to their grit, their discipline. I must mention some of them like those men of Bergues who organised a remarkable cinema in an ancient cave amidst the ruins; like the Abbé LORENT

of Sains-en-Gohelle who succeeded, thanks to his tenacity in an impossible situation, in opening a cinema which from the beginning had the support of the public; or like Monsi or HOLLEBECQ of Feignies who, with astonishing perseverance, directed a splendid hall, or Monsieur LE-JOSNE of Bhuccourt who equipped a cinema whose capacity was greater than the number of inhabitants of the district yet succeeded in filling his cinema several times a week.

I could mention many others but I wish to pay homage to all these hidden pioneers whose devotion and stubborness has made our Office what it is to-day.

The mathematical results represent a grand triumph, but it is of something else that we are more proud. It is to have succeeded in being admitted to the profession. I spoke just now of a certain hostility encountered when we began — that is now a thing of the past, and on the contrary, we have made firm friendships which, we are sure, can only increase as time goes on.

We are also certain, and this may sound a little pretentious, that we now count as an indispensable part of the corporation; we have a loyal following and, above all, we have brought to the cinema a new clientèle who were hitherto not attracted by the films, some even who were antagonistic. We have often noticed that in those places where a new Family Cinema is opened there is at once a clientèle, who, if we did not exist, would not go to the cinema at all.

Does this announcement of good tidings mean that now we have reached our desired objective? No. There is much more to be done if the Family Halls are to be multiplied. The situation is hardly more than ameliorated. We need more and more good films. We are constantly asking for more good films. We wish that the producers would offer us films that respect human dignity; we want healthy films.

Do not make a mistake. We are not asking for heavy films, sermons in celluloid, we are not proposing to make the cinema a weekday confraternity. We are among the most prominent of those who proclaim that the cinema is and ought to be a distraction. The cinemas need not become lecture rooms or conference halls. If we applaud pieces like MON-

SIEUR VINCENT ou HOMMES A HOMMES, be it noted that we have also applauded works like NAR-CISSE; for we repeat that the cinema must be a distraction but a healthy distraction able to move us to tears or laughter, but which in one case or the other should be capable of doing so without falling into vulgarity or pornography.

We often get the impression that the films we show have not been made for our public. Don't you think that too often producers are thinking of the Champs Elysées and

not of the provinces?

There is need for the prestige film; we want the film which is able to cross the frontiers to carry abroad the spirit of France and the worth of our artists and technicians, but the one does not cut out the other. People say that we must save the French film, but we do not want to go on acting as guinea pigs all the time.

I should like to see some of our high-brow directors come to our cinemas to make contact with our public; to see them moved by simple things, reacting to beautiful ideas, to

hear their frank laughter.

If I were to ask the exhibitors who are present to-day, they would say that their best box-office comes from the good old melodramas taken from the feuilletons which were the delight of our grand-parents.

It has to be repeated that the public is simple, it is not at all complicated; it thinks nothing of the film which is philosophic or fashionable, whose technique is snobbishly artistic. It wants to laugh, to cry, to be moved, it does not bother itself about how many millions the film cost to make.

If you want to help the French cinema it is necessary to come back again to what the public wants, to a sane and healthy and logical conception of the part to be played by the producers. If you want to increase the number of your clients, make us decent films; there are other places to portray besides bawdy houses or prostitutes. When taking count of public taste, make use of those things which are less bad and less depraved.

Some may say that films made in this way would be dull and bad for business. We reply that it is possible to make films that are good both morally and artistically. The examples of films of this kind that have been successful are numerous. I will mention only three which are of a kind that are totally different one to the other. MONSIEUR VINCENT, a serious film, of undoubted prestige

value, but which has had as cintillating career. LE MAITRE DE FOR-GES which was slashed by all the critics without pity, but which is a perfect model of the cheap melodrama which brings in receipts like anything. Finally, NARCISSE, the best funny film that we have known and which the cinemas have taken fifty-six times.

Here are three decent films which are the proof of what I have been saying.

It is possible to make good and decent films which bring in dividends and fill the cinemas.

Charles Verhaye.

THE HOLY FATHER'S TELE-VISED ADDRESS.

His Holiness, Pius XII, undertook to make a televised speech at Easter on behalf of the American and French radio systems. The well-known radio commentator, Father Pichard, arranged for the recording of this speech for the French Television, by means of a film which was made by our friend and collaborator, Jean-Pierre Chartier who will tell us, in the next issue of this Review, of the deep impression made upon him by the making of this exceptional film.

THE PAULIST FATHERS IN JAPAN.

The Fathers of the Society of St. Paul established in Japan, have attacked the question of the film apostolate with great energy. Their first hall seating a few thousand people, has been opened in Tokio and others are due to follow.

The Japanese authorities and other local personalities have been greatly moved by the Reverend Father Marcellino, Superior of the Paulists in Japan, and have shown themselves very interested.

A Commission for the moral classification of all films shown in the cinemas is soon to be undertaken in collaboration with Japanese Catholics.

UNION OF CATHOLIC PUBLICISTS IN BRAZIL.

We have already noted the new REVUE de L. U. P. C. published by the active organization of Sao Paulo. It is interesting to note here that this organization co-operates intimately with a group of the most important Catholic cinemas.

In Sao Paulo alone, there are seven large halls, one with a 2.500 capacity, not to mention college cinemas. At Sao Salvador (State of Bahia) there are five Catholic cinemas; at Sergipe, two; at Belo Horizonte, three; etc. The moving spirit behind these halls is our friend Mansueto De Gregorio who has been elected President of the Exhibitors Syndicate in the State of St. Paul. He has organized several religious manifestations in company with the municipality; to mention only one, the General Easter Communion, at which all the professional cinema syndicates took part.

CINE FORUMS: A New Experiment.

One of the essential conditions for success in our efforts to interest the general public is a constant search after fresh ideas. In this connection we have tried out in several different parts of the country an experiment which has already been essayed by the International Institute «Pro Deo» in Rome. However, I think that Belgium is the first country to use the method in a systematic fashion.

At first sight the cine-forum seems not different from the ordinary cine-club. A film is shown and there is a discussion about it. What distinguishes the cine-forum altogether from the cine-club is the object of the discussion. The object of the cine-forum is clearly determined: it is to get the public to grasp the fundamental notion of film.

The formal point of view is abandoned for the sake of a realist point of view: harmonising fount and form. A typical cine-forum session falls normally into three sections:

- 1. Introduction, placing the film in its historical and general category (e. g. Italian neo-realism in the case of VIVERE IN PACE: British intimate stylism in the case of BRIEF ENCOUNTER etc.). Therefore if it proposed to hold a series of such cine-forums one should have a sufficiently complete knowledge of modern tendencies on the screen.
 - 2. Projection of the film.
- 3. Discussion on the theme. How is this idea expressed. Evidently a lot depends on the leader of the discussion who has to take care that it does not digress into secondary questions. The only question to decide is: What is the fundamental idea in the story told. Films like BRIEF ENCOUNTER, HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY or JERICHO are easy to deal with in this fashion for they abound in rich and diverse

themes; it is not so easy to talk about MONSIEUR VINCENT or IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE, in both of which the main point is not so much one of problems posed but affirmations made, and in the latter case,

easily defined.

The cine-forum has a cultural object — to teach people how to appreciate worth-while films. Hence there is a second and also important point for discussion: How did the director deal with the central theme? If one interrogates the public about the parts of the film which most struck them, one has the interesting experience of seeing them gradually discovering the language of the film.

It is here that the interest of the cine-forum is to be found. The public is not being given a conference on a film: they have the sensation of discovering the cinema for themselves. Their attitude towards the cinema changes, and little by little, perhaps unconsciously, they become more

critical.

To work for a cinema imbued with Christian culture. This is the object towards which Catholic film action is moving. Several experiences with cine-forums in different parts of the country convince us that here we have a means to that end which has proved its efficiency.

Leo Lunders.

THE EFFORT OF A SMALL ISLAND.

Malta also is making a great effort in the Catholic Film field. The Film Section of the Malta Catholic Institute, under the presidency of the Rev. S. Laspina, publishes regularly a CATHOLIC FILM GUIDE in all the leading Maltese Papers. This Guide, based on the classification of films from international sources, has been very well received by all sections of the population and is becoming every day more popular and interesting.

Another feature of this Film Section is a Film Library of 16mm Sound Films for hire to the Parochial Halls of Malta. In spite of the many difficulties due to the infancy of the 16mm sound film, this activity is gaining ground and in a little more than a year from its start already 14 Catholic Action Centres are exhibiting educational and recreational films to the Parish youth and family groups.

It is also the intention of this Film Section of the Malta Catholic Institute to produce in the future local documentaries of general Catholic Interest. The first experiments made have proved quite satisfactory. An idea is now being entertained to produce a full dress documentary of the Catholic Activities and Catholic Social welfare in the Maltese Islands, portraying the work of the Clergy, the Religious Orders and the Lay Organizations, especially those of Catholic Action. It is hoped that this film will be of interest also to Catholics in continental countries.

S. Laspina.

FORMATION OF A NATIONAL FILM OFFICE IN EGYPT.

Father Pierre Franzidis tells us that the Centre Chrétien Egyptien du Cinéma (C. C. E. C.) was founded several months ago at Alexandria and that it has already received hierarchical approbation. It extends its activities throughout the country and has an Arab-speaking team in Cairo.

Among its principal activities are the following: the formation of cinema criticism, the constitution of as complete a documentation as possible on all aspects of the cinema, the organisation of a Cine-Club; the establishment of a circuit of 16mm talking films for all missionary stations, the organization of a distributing centre.

INTERNATIONAL PILGRIMAGE TO ROME FOR CINEMA PER-SONNEL

DURING THE HOLY YEAR.

During the course of conversation between our Secretary General and the organizers of the cinema section of the Holy Year displays, it was definitely arrived at that O. C. I. C. should organize a great International Pilgrimage consisting of professional cinema workers, for the beginning of September, 1950. The date of the pilgrimage will probably coincide with the international Congress of Catholic Artists (painters, sculptors, musicians, etc.) and with the pilgrimage of the students and Catholic intellectuals associated with PAX ROMANA. We envisage, therefore, an impressive combined manifestation of artistic and intellectual activities offering its homage to the Holy

We suggest that now is the time for our friends all over the world to begin to prepare for the effective participation of the cinema personalities of their respective countries in this pilgrimage.

Further, O. C. I. C. has been invited to co-operate in the organisation of the Cinema Section of the Exhibition of Catholic Activities which will be held at Rome during the Holy Year.

O. C. I. C. GALAS.

The special diploma accorded by O. C. I. C. at Venice to the Swiss film «LES ANGES MARQUES (THE SEARCH)» was solemnly presented to the co-producers, Praesens-Film and Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer on February 24th by Dr. Charles Reinert, Vice-President of O. C. I. C. and President of our jury at Venice. The occasion was a gala performance at the Marivaux Cinema at Luxembourg in the presence of the Grand Ducal Family and the members of the Executive Committee of O. C. I. C. The proceeds were devo ted to the charitable works of the Grand Duchess.

Another gala was organised by O. C. I. C. in conjunction with the Belgian group Caritas. This time it was the première in the great hall of the Palais des Beaux-Arts at Brussels of the film Dr. LAENNEC which took place on March 29th, 1949, in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. Maurice Cloche and Pierre Blanchar, respectively, travelled from Paris to receive the applause of an audience profoundly moved by their beautiful production.

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF O. C. I. C.

The Executive Committee of O. C. I. C. met at Luxembourg on February 24th under the chairmanship of Dr. Jean Bernard.

Among the subjects discussed were:
1) the forthcoming meeting of the General Council of O. C. I. C. to take place in London from 16th to 20th July, 1949. 2) Modifications of the Statutes of O. C. I. C.

The nature of the moral support to be accorded to certain film productions. In this connection it was decided to accord a special welcome on the part of the International Catholic Cinema Office to the world release of the American film «JOAN OF ARC», produced by Sierra—R. K. O., directed by Victor Fleming and starring Ingrid Bergman. The Committee also approved the terms of a letter addressed by the President to M. Abel Gance in connection with the production of his film «THE DIVINE TRAGEDY»

A meeting of the Editorial Board of the «International film Review» took place prior to the Committee meeting in order to discuss the programme for forthcoming issues of the Review.

ECHOS

NEW SUCCESS FOR MONSIEUR VINCENT.

It is with the greatest pleasure that we welcome the decision of the Academy of Motion Pictures in the United States to award an Oscar (the Annual Prize offered each year by this Academy to the best motion pictures) to «MONSIEUR VIN-CENT» as the best foreign film shown in America this year. Among other films which came close to winning this prize were «PAISA» (Italian) and «ANTOINE ET ANTOINETTE» (French). Laurence Olivier's splendid film «HAMLET» received an «OSCAR» as the best film of the year 1948.

THE TRIAL OF CARDINAL MINDSZENTY TO BE FILMED.

The American producer, Jack L. Warner announces the forthcoming production of a film dealing with the trial of Cardinal Mindszenty to express, he says, the indignation of the civilized world in face of this enormous injustice. Anthony Veiller will write the scenario and be in charge of production.

LECTURES ON FILMOLOGY IN ITALY.

Filmology, that is to say, scientific study of the cinema and its applications, penetrates more and more the domain of the academies. Under the direction of our friend Prof. Enrico Fulchignoni, the University of Rome has organized a series of lectures, in two groups: (1) History and Aesthetics, (2) Psychology and Sociology. Among the lecturers we find the names of Francesso Pasinetti, Enrico Castelli, Marie Ponzo, Mgr. Agostino Gemelli, Luigi Volpicelli, etc. Several lectures have also been given within this organization by M. G. Cohen-Seat, of the Institute of Film Study in Paris.

FILM FESTIVALS 1949.

One had hoped, after the relative calm of the past year, that the organizers of the various International Festivals would have taken care not to crowd too many meetings in the course of the one season. It is useless, for 1949 will see no less than five festivals taking place in Europe.

The first, somewhat restrained but of particular interest to us is that taking place in Vienna from 23rd to 30th April. It will take the form of an International Festival of Religious Films. There will be a series of films of which a very important one will be «PASSION ACCORDING TO ST. MARK» with music by Bach. There will also be some conferences of which one is to be delivered by our Vice-President, Dr. Charles Reinert.

Belgium enters the ring by organizing her second World Festival of Film And Fine Arts, to take place this year at the well-known watering place, Knokke-Le Zoute from June 18th till July 10th.

The Belgian Festival will scarcely have ended before the Locarno Festival begins (July 8th to 18th) immediately followed in its turn by the Festival of Marianske Lazne, the only manifestation of this kind behind the Iron Curtain (July 23rd to August 7th).

After this, the «Festival Trotter» will take himself to Venice for the traditional Biennale (August 21st to 31st) thence to terminate his season at Cannes where France renews her festivals, interrupted last year. (September 2nd to 17th).

One might ask, at the close of this plethora of manifestations, whether at the end of the year, there is any film left without the distinction of an International Festival Prize!

CANADIAN SHORT FILMS.

Thanks to the kindness of M. A. D. Perry, representative in France of the National Film du Canada, we were present at a private showing of a remarkable series of eight Canadian films to which we draw our reader's attention. Here are the titles: «CA-DET-ROUSSEL» (animated marionettes in colour), «ORDEAL BY FIRE», «HORIZON DU QUE-BEC», «IT'S FUN TO SING», «REGARDS DU CANADA», «THE ZOO», «CHANT POPULAIRE No 6», illustrated by animated diagrams.

A PROPOS «CASSE-PIEDS».

We receive from a friendly French director, Jean Dréville, a charming letter in which he tells us that it is he who directed the Noël-Noël film «LES CASSE-PIEDS» about which we spoke in our first number. We take this opportunity of extending our wishes for its great success.

A STATEMENT

BY Mr. J. I. BREEN
Mr. Joseph I. Breen, VicePresident of the M. P. A. A. (Motion Picture Association of America) writes to us as follows:

«In connection with the statement appearing on page 34, Nr. 1, of your Review, to the effect that neither the Disney story, «ME-LODY TIME», nor the picture «MACBETH», «is a production of M. P. A. A., the association of the 8 largest Hollywood concerns», please let me say that this is not correct. The Walt Disney Corporation is a member of the M. P. A. A., and so, too, is the Republic Studio, producers of «MACBETH».

CHILDREN AND THE CINEMA

by J. A. V. B.

The Home Office has set up a
Departmental Committee to discuss
the activities of Children's Cinema Clubs and to enquire upon the legislation necessary concerning children and film. The Committee has the task of examining the situation and making a report with respect to the

following questions:

a) What influence the frequenting of cinema has on children under the age of 16 years, with a special mention with regard to the number of children attending the Cinema Clubs.

b) In consequence of these enquiries to suggest what modifications may be desirable in the present system of classification of films, both with regard to the actual system under which children are admitted to cinemas and also with regard to the organisation, conduct, or the direction of Children's Cinema Clubs.

The Committee is composed of 22 members drawn from every sphere of influence and having a profound knowledge of children and the things that concern them. Since February 1948 witnesses have been asked to give testimony before each of the reunions of this Committee. The Secretary of the Catholic Film Society was invited to submit a memorandum and personally to present the views of Catholics in England concerning the questions being examined by the

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BOOKS

LES MILLE ET UN MÉTIERS DU CINÉMA. Paris. Éditions J. Melot 1948.

Pierre Leprohon, well-known critic and writer has already given us proof of his authority in this genre. He now presents the public with LES MILLE ET UN MÉTIERS DU CINÉMA, a work which is not merely a repertoire of all the departments of the industry from the clapperboy to the star, not forgetting the financier the commercial agents and the critics, but also includes discussions on such important aspects of the problem as the author of the film, the question of style, the role of the critic, and a hundred others. His book, therefore, is something more than a monograph on the subject and provides, in fact, an excellent introduction to the study of film across the entire range of this picturesque medium.

G. D.

LE FILM DE 16 mm. Buenos Ayres. Éditions Techniques pour l'Enseignement du Cinéma.

A useful encyclopedia for the amateur film-maker, this is not only a book dealing with the practical side of camera-angles, projection, etc. it also provides studies of a general character dealing with the whole feel of the amateur cinematographer, his film style and, thanks to an excellent series of illustrations, a very pertinent study of composition and setting, points that are of extreme importance and so often mishandled by the amateur, and unhappily, sometimes by the professional. The advice given on the question of lighting is also clearly presented with the assistance of a system of designs which are curiously ideographical.

G. D.

LES CENT VISAGES DU CINE-MA, by Marcel Lapierre, 700 pp. quarto, 64 pages of illustrations and 161 cartoons (éditions Bernard Grasset).

Following upon the remarkable works of George Sadoul, René Jeanne and Charles Ford on the history of the cinema we now have a kind of summing-up in the

large book given us by Marcel Lapierre, a summary of the end of a half-century.

The author deals vigorously with the early days of the cinema; its audience, halls and producers. There are long and detailed chapters on the best period of the silent cinema, of the historical turning point that came with the talking film and which he calls «the second campaign of the cinema». A chapter on «les rigueurs d'Anastasie» appears to us to be debatable; there is far more to be gleaned in what he says on the importance of the cinema as a social factor.

A second part treats of the history of the various national film movements including productions from the Balkans and the Far East: there is an eloquent section on the deeply felt desire of all peoples to express their aspirations by means of the screen, a phenomenon which must play a strong part in the evolution of the second half of the century.

J. M.

"A FILM STAR IN BELGRAVE SQUARE".

By Robert Henrey. London. Peter Davies Ltd. 1948. 12 s. 6 d.

The star in question is Bobby Henrey, 8 year old star of the film "THE FALLEN IDOL". Many readers will have made his acquaintance in an earlier Robert Henrey book, "A VILLAGE IN PICCADILLY", and they will be interested to learn that it was the portrait of the child on the wrapper of this book that led to permission being asked for him to act in Carol Reed's film.

I do not know which of the Robert Henrey couple wrote the earlier books, but in this case the author is the wife, who was present wherever her son was at work on his film. She watched shooting going on in Belgrave Square by day, and saw it transformed at night, the great lamps revealing hidden charms and giving the square an excitingly different aspect; she went to the Zoo with Bobby and his fellow-stars, for some of the action takes place there, and finally she and her son moved down to Shepperton Studios and took up

their abode in the stars' hotel in the grounds whilst work on the set was in progress. Thanks to her vivid pen and powers of description the reader learns much about what happens during the making of a film. In her pages he meets many of the people concerned, from Sir Alexander Korda, in his luxury suite at Claridge's, down to Eric, Bobby's 16 year old standin. He watches Carol Reed and begins to understand how one of the foremost directors of the day achieved such astonishing results with his young star. The author was clearly very soon at home amongst the busy, gifted, friendly people of whom she writes; indeed for a brief moment she joined their ranks, becoming an actor for an afternoon in the part of the ambassador's wife, Bobby's film mother, wearing a magnificent mink coat especially hired for the occasion!

The decision whether or not to allow the child to become a film star must have been a difficult one, and the mother's natural anxiety for her son is evident throughout the book. She is uneasy lest the effect on him of this new and exciting life with its inevitable quota of limelight shall be harmful. As time proceeds, however, she seems to come to the conclusion that no harm will result, for before the end of the book she is writing of people whispering "about possible contracts for Bobby in Hollywood", and there is no indication that the prospect dismays her.

The book has photographic illustrations in which figure a large number of the stars and technicians concerned. It is charmingly written, one or two irritating mannerisms apart, and can be confidently recommended.

M. Moultrie.

FRENCH SCIENTIFIC FILMS by Dr. P. Thevenard et G. Tassel, Editions de la Jeune Parque, 136, Boulevard Haussman, Paris, 1949.

We must be grateful to the authors for having thought of such a book. It fills a gap for those who want to know something about the development of French Scientific Films from the beginning of screen history to the present day. It is the first book to summarise the work of the great pioneers of film progress, and it is

greatly to be regretted that other histories of cinema development barely touch the subject and devote themselves exclusively to feature films. The scientific film was worthy of more attention. As Thevenard says in his introduction, Scientific Films may be considered as having been in the front rank of pioneer films, and this for two reasons: they were the first to be made, and secondly, the science film of its very nature necessitates the use of specialised techniques which are only employed for the more unusual effects in the ordinary film. These special effects are part and parcel of the work done by the pioneer Science Film. From the beginning the Scientific Films have opened up fields rich in possibilities which they can claim by right because of what has been done in the study of motion. Two chapters in the book are devoted to the study of motion. One gives information about the analytical study of rapid motion, and the other does the same for the study of the synthesis of slow motion. An examination is made of the results actually obtained in two branches of scientific activity: Biology and astronomy.

The second part of the book deals with the spreading of knowledge of things scientific, and includes all activities which have this end in view, the most essential being the instructive film in all its varied forms, and the popular film which brings specialised knowledge down to the level of the average audience. Articles dealing with instructional films are being ever more widely read, and references are frequently made to such people as Jean Painlevé, indefatigable pioneer of film research, instruction, and simplification for public use; Marc Gantagrel, moving spirit for technical instruction in screen matters, and Jean Brerault, advocate of the use of the cinema for primary schools.

The last part of the book gives a thorough study of living design, and deals with certain special branches of scientific film work such as submarine filming, surgical and radio-cinematography. It will be seen that the book gives a complete and well documented account of the problem that is being tackled, and for that it is well worth recommending.

SCENARIOS.

Until recently, scenarios were but rarely published. Petite Illustration gave us some; Abel Gance his NAPOLEON; Léon Poirier his APPEL DU SILENCE. Now we seem likely to see many more. We have had ENTREE DES ARTISTES from H. Jeanson, LA SYMPHONIE PASTORALE from Boit and Aurenche, LE CORBEAU, from Chavance and Clouzot (Nouvelle Edition); LA CHARTREUSE DE PARME from Pierre Very, LA BELLE MEUNIERE from Pagnol (Editions Self), LE DIABLE BOITEUX from Sachca Guitry (Editions de l'Ecran).

These contacts with literary form are interesting since they enable us to discover which texts are likely to be of value apart from the screen, they also enable us to see whether visuals add anything to the scenario.

7. M.

CINEMA DE FRANCE by Roger Regent (Editions Bellefaye).

This volume, historically and critically satisfying, reviews the films produced in France during the Occupation. French screens were denuded of American films and overloaded with German productions, generally of an inferior character. French film-makers were reduced to providing propaganda films for the authorities. The material conditions were bad.

Nevertheless, French production managed to maintain an output of low-budget but excellent films. Some of them were masterpieces. Roger Regent even talks of the emergence of a style — the French style.

All this is most significant and gives rise to innumerable observations, and is the reason why Roger Regent's book is something more than a mere inventory: it provides a panorama of the French cinema at a time which was momentous.

There are some points on the other hand, about which we feel disposed to question.

ANNUAL CATALOGUE OF SUB-STANDARD FILMS

A list of all 16mm films for hire and sale since the last catalogues of 1947 and 1948. Published by D. Buisset, Edition de l'Association du 16mm sonore, 4, rue André-Colledeboeuf. Paris 16e. 120 pp. 8°. 306 frs.

Sub-standard film is becoming more and more popular among the devotees of the educational and family film, M. Buisset's Annual has become during the past three years the indispensable reference for all those looking for 16mm films to hire or purchase. Not only have we a list of some 2,500 films distributed commercially with indications as to their distributors, but there are also a thousand new titles of films which may be found in both private and public film libraries. To all those who so frequently ask us for information about films of this kind, we warmly recommend this publication.

Katholische Filmhefte Nr. 1. Text der Filmenzyklika; 160 Filmbesprechungen; Katholische Filmarbeit. Herausgegeben vom Katholischen Filmbüro. München. 94 pp. 1949.

In its first brochure, the Catholic Film Office in München places at the disposal of the faithful a useful documentation on the cinema. His Excellency, Mgr. Berning, Bishop of Osnabruck, the German Hierarchy's representative in charge of Film Action, explains in an introduction the reason of the moral classification used, while Dr. Anton Kochs, of Cologne, outlines the system. There is a list of reviews of those films distributed in Germany together with their appropriate moral classifications. The German text of the Encyclical «Vigilanti Cura» with a very practical commentary by Father Max Grischneder, S. J., on the method of organizing Catholics in the work of Film Action, with models of the formulas used by a classification commission, complete this useful publication.

"RISING TWENTY", by Pearl Jephcott, London, Faber and Faber 1948, 8 s. 6 d.

One of the most urgent problems facing the workers in the field of the

Film Apostolate today is to know how best to curb and control the power which the film has over the minds of the young and impressionable. This is not to say that all films are bad. But it cannot be denied that films are the main sources of knowledge to a very large number of badly broughtup and ill educated young people. If only the producers of films could be induced to realise the great responsibility that is theirs in presenting the minds and senses of their youthful audiences with the powerful stimulation and excitement that most films provide!

Pearl Jephcott has made a sociologolical study of the greatest value to all those interested in the present environment and development of young girls who were entering their teens when war broke out. Of particular interest to the readers of this review are the many references

to the effects which the cinema has on the minds and outlook of the girls who are the subjects of this study. There is considerable evidence produced to show that the cinema can be beneficial as well as harmful.

One quotation will serve to indicate the scope and tendency of the book. "The trouble with intensive picture going lies not in the sinfulness or inanity of so many films, but in the simple fact that the girl has only a limited amount of time in which to learn to become a fully developed adult, and that a routine of several nights every week at the pictures eats into this time with a regularity and persistence that is the more alarming as one watches it taking place from childhood till the girl has become adult in body, even if she is still immature in mind and emotions".

J. A. V. B.

during the early summer of 1948 and which several local reviews, particularly Mgr. Franceschi's weekly «Criterio» reported at length. The teaching of the International Catholic Cinema Office was, for the first time, directly put before the organisers of Catholic opinion in South America and it received a number of favourable comments.

«EINORDNUNG DES FILMS» by Werner Barzel, S. J. in «Stimmen der Zeit». Vol. 142, No 11. August 1948. Munich, Germany, pp. 368— 382.

It is unfortunately not possible to do justice here to the very important study which Father Barzel has devoted to the place of film in the hierarchy of cultural values, spiritual and moral. We have asked the eminent author to explain his original and profound views for the benefit of our readers in a forthcoming issue of the I. F. R.

ARTICLES

«THE CINEMA IS CLASS CON-SCIOUS», by Alfred Vasquez Carrizosa, in «TESTIMONIO», Bogota (Columbia) June 1948, pp. 33 —39.

In an interesting study by Alfred Vasquez Carrizosa, on the part played by the cinema in awakening class consciousness in Latin America, we are told that there is a difference between the European public, capable of dominating the subjects given him in the film, because he has been educated by centuries of theatre-going, and the North American public who only goes to the cinema after a day of anxious labour in order to forget it. Films to the North American are but a light entertainment, which is why they react more strongly against immorality on the screen. In the tropics, the climatic and social conditions confer on the cinema a more powerful influence. The film truly transforms the popular soul, it favours the disappearance of traditional customs and country ways. The revolution of April 9th. 1948 in Bogota revealed this ruptured equilibrium to have a systematically dechristianising source in the cinema. This was

made the more easy because, as a Peruvian writer, Luis Alberto Sanchez, defined it, with regard to the behaviour of these countries, «the exterior dominates the interior, custom dominates belief». Now, on the screen, the public contemplates tragedies, comedies and worldly dramas, the details of which would appear insignificant and laughter-raising to the more advanced peoples, here, however, they stimulate and instigate social reactions.

All this indicates what a great responsibility belongs to film producers, at the same time it calls for a positive and systematic reform of the social order in the Christian sense.

«EL MUNDO CATOLICO Y EL CINE», by André Ruszkowski, in *Criterio*, Buenos Aires (Argentine). November 1948.

The constructive attitude proclaimed by Maurice Cloche was also preached by the Secretary General of the O. C. I. C. in the Conferences which he gave in Latin America

«PSYCHOLOGISCHES ZUM SPIELFILM» by Therese Wagner-Simon, in «Schweizer Rundschau», Einsiedeln, Switzerland. A specially printed booklet on Psychology (No. 8/9. November-December 1948, pp. 785—790).

This study is worth reading. The author shows how the entertainment film often inculcates a fictitious ideal far removed from actuality and false to things as they are.

There are some pertinent reflections on the «happy ending» an attitude indicative of the infantile notion of happiness considered normal in so many films, the simple satisfaction of desire. If the film is to have a healthy influence, it will have to give back again to the spectator courage and self-confidence, says the author.

The observations of this interesting article correspond perfectly to the thesis, so long defended by Catholic Film Actionists, namely that the cinema must come back to reality. The success of the post-war Italian films, of MONSIEUR VINCENT and the English school (BRIEF ENCOUNTER) and some of the Swiss films, are sufficient proof of this.

«TOWARDS A TRULY CHRIS-TIAN FILM», by Maurice Cloche, in «Forces Chrétiennes», Paris (France) No 1, January 1948, p. 5.

The same point of view is shared by the director of MONSIEUR VIN-CENT and DR. LAENNEC, Maurice Cloche, as is clear from this extract from an address which he gave to the Institute of the Science of Public Opinion in Paris; «It is necessary that the cinema should be made use of by modern men who are not only realists, but at the same time, men of religious convictions who will bring to the cinema their culture, the result of their contemplation, their own spirit. When such men have brought such a mental equipment to the cinema, then we shall see a cinema which is Christian, with spiritual values informing it».

enables our Italian friends to produce beautiful works so profoundly im pregnated with the Christian spirit.

«LES FICHES DU CINEMA» publiched by the Centrale Catholique du Cinéma en France. Editions penses Vrai. 21, Bd. Montmartre Paris (France).

Each month the French Catholic Cinema Office publishes in the form of separate pages easy to file alphabetically, a booklet of detailed film reviews to which they append a moral classification. These reviews give an appreciation of the moral, artistic and technical quality of each film as well as a resumé of the scenario and names of actors etc.

«SEGNALAZIONI CINEMATO-GRAFICHE», published by the Centro Cattolico Cinematografico, 10 Via della Conciliazione, Rome (Italy), fulfils the same role in Italy. Printed in a slightly different form, these leaflets are issued in bound copies each half year.

BIANCO E NERO, monthly Review of CENTRO SPERIMENTALE DI CINEMATOGRAFIA. Director: Luigi Chiarini, Edizioni dell' Ateneo, Rome, Via Adige 80-86. Subscription 5800 lira per annum.

One of the few serious reviews devoted to the cultural side of cinema, competently directed by Luigi Chiarini, a theorist but also a director of worthwhile films. The February issue, 1949, contains some studies on the psychological aspects of certain films: American (L. Quaglietti), British (Roberto Paolella) and German (Mario Verdone). R. W. Dickinson, the Assistant Director of the British Film Institute speaks of the attitude of the public faced with the artifices of the cinema. Claude Edmond Magny makes a comparison between the aesthetic of the novel and that of the cinema. The article by Renzo R e n z a on the «Mythologie et Contemplation chez Visconti, Ford et Einstein» appears to us to be somewhat disputable, especially in view of a certain confusion of spiritual values. There are résumés in English and French of the principal articles.

REVIEWS

FILMFRONT - FILMSTREDIEN. Director J. P. Gribling, Oude Delft 24 (Holland).

The amalgamation of two Dutch Catholic reviews has resulted in the birth of this important bi-monthly devoted to the cultural aspects of the cinema. We greet it warmly. The number before us, that of February 15th, has a courageous study of the work of Serge Eisenstein, and also an interesting comparison between the Italian and English schools of realism. S. I. Van Nooten contributes the first part of an analysis of the present state of French film.

«DER FILMBERATER». Director Dr. Charles Reinert, 13, Auf der Mauer, Zürich (Switzerland).

The Issue for February 3rd of this bi-monthly organ of the Swiss Film Commission has an exceptional by valuable critical study of the French film «DEDEE D'ANVERS», by Oso Keller. Unfortunately pressure on space will not allow us to give a résumé here. There is also a statement about the crisis concerning the stars in Hollywood. As usual, of course, there are also excellent reviews of the new films.

«CINEMA d'OGGI», Director, Remo Branca, Piazza Stroggi 33, Roma (Italy).

This is, on the other hand, specially devoted to the social, educational and technical aspects of sub-standard film. Actually, this new series replaces, with the March issue, the *«Rivista del Passo Ridotto»*, which Professor

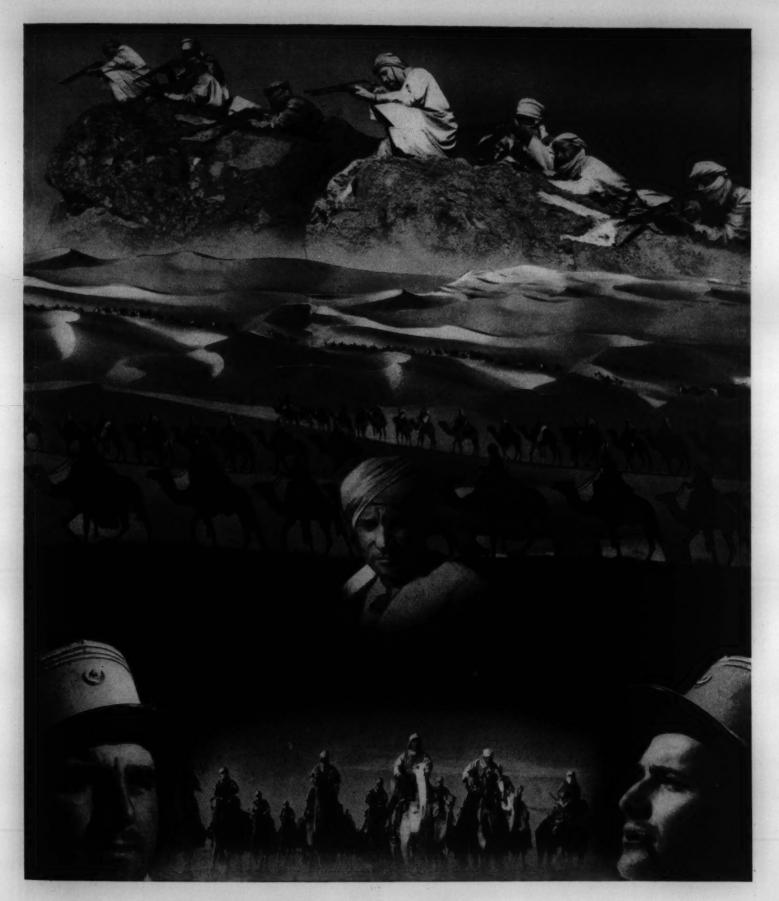
Branca used to direct with his proverbial dynamism. An editorial treats of «Cinematographic Culture». In it the Director of the Review fulminates against the confusion which tends to assert that «est immoral ce qui est imbécile». There is also a useful article for amateur cineastes.

«REVISTA U. P. C.» Director, Mansueto de Gregorio, Rua do Riachuelo, 219, Sao Paulo (Brazil).

It is with great pleasure that we salute the birth of the monthly Review of the Union of Catholic Propagandists of Brazil. It has its centre at Sao Paulo and the first number, dated February 1949, has twenty pages dedicated to the cinema. The editors have the kindness to announce the publication of our International Film Review. May our two Reviews help to draw together the bonds which unite those Brazilians who are working for the betterment of the cinema, and their friends throughout the entire world! The Review also carries articles covering Theatre, Radio, Television and Press.

«LA REVISTA DEL CINEMATO-GRAFICO». Director Turi Vasile, Via della Conciliazione, 10 Rome (Italy).

More and more the monthly review of the Catholic Film Centre in Rome, takes on the aspect of cultural publication devoted to the spreading of knowledge of the Seventh Art among the greatest number of people. It bears all the artistic finesse which



L'ESCADRON BLANC

Joseph PEYRE, who wrote the well-known novel «L'ESCADRON BLANC» had to

wait for fifteen years for the French film he wished the most to see! Director René CHANAS has just finished making the film right in the middle of the Sahara, with Jean CHEVRIER, René LEFEVRE, FRANÇOIS-PATRICE, and Michèle MARTIN.

For more than two months they have been turning into a real life the novel. For it has not been a question of studio background but of a real campaign in the Sahara grouping French and native troops, men and mehara from the famous «Compagnie saharienne du Touat», appearing in the book.

In the filming, the Company set out again twenty years after the event from these very walls, red ramparts of Adrar, towards the Hammada, the dark rocks of Hank and the hell of the Erg Cheche.

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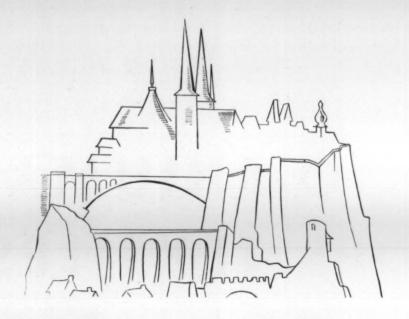


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*

Number Three, ready in July, will contain articles expressing the British point of view in films,

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It will also contain articles by

Jean Chataigner, E. Flipo, S. J., P. Pichard, O. P., Charles Ford, Thomas Pryor, Jean-Pierre Chartier, Diego Fabbri and our permanent correspondents throughout the world.

*

The October Issue, No. 4 will be devoted to the Italian cinema

with articles from

Father Agostino Gemelli, O. F. M., Vittorino Veronese, Luigi Gedda, Diego Fabbri, Piero Regnoli, G.-B. Rondie, Turi Vasile, Enrico Fulchignoni etc.

*

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